1992

Old St. Peter's Protestant Episcopal Church, Philadelphia: An Architectural History and Inventory (1758-1991)

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OLD ST. PETER'S PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH, PHILADELPHIA: AN ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY AND INVENTORY (1758-1991)

Frederick Lee Richards Jr.

A THESIS

in

The Graduate Program in Historic Preservation

Presented to the faculties of the University of Pennsylvania in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

1992

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To my father, the Rev. F. Lee Richards
Rector of St. Peter's Church
(1970-1985)

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the following people for providing their assistance and support through the long process of researching and writing this study: my parents, Harriett and Lee Richards; Wendell "Tad" W. Meyer, rector of St. Peter's; Judy Keene, St. Peter's parish secretary; George E. Thomas, my teacher and advisor at the University of Pennsylvania; Ruth O'Brien, my thesis reader; and Jennifer Goodman, my dear friend and constant support.

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INTRODUCTION

This study of St. Peter's Church is neither an Historic Structure Report (HSR) nor a definitive architectural history of the church. Rather, it is an interpreted chronicle of the material changes made to the building and its site based upon surviving parish records from 1758 until 1991. Taken together, the timelines should serve church stewards (as well as historians and preservation professionals) as an exhaustive compilation of official records as they document the physical changes made to the building fabric. Every architectural feature that could be considered a permanent element of the church and its site was documented. Only furniture and the memorial plaques attached to the inner walls of the church were omitted.

To the degree, however, that an HSR would demand a thorough investigation of archival records, this work is complete -- every page of every known written document that survives from St. Peter's history, either as an independent parish or as co-equal to Christ Church (from 1761 to 1832) has been read and analyzed. The primary sources for the timelines were the accounting ledgers and meeting minutes meticulously kept by the Vestry, the accounting warden and the parish treasurer.[1] In this instance, the monthly

[1] In the Protestant Episcopal Church, the Vestry acts as the board of directors for the parish corporation. Normally selected from leading members of a church, the Vestry, along with the rector

meeting records of St. Peter's Vestry provided the single most important source of information. After that, came the cash book entries kept by the parish treasurer and the ledger book kept by the Vestry's accounting warden.

The first three chapters preceding the timelines discuss the various historical movements and personalities that influenced the mid-18th century plan and style of the church, and provide an overview of the architectural changes to the building. With Chapter V, a series of chronologies trace the record of additions, renovations and maintenance to the church and parish properties. Of primary focus are the features of the building itself, followed by the surrounding church yard.

The introductory summary for each timeline should be regarded as a personal interpretation of the information, which has been correlated with other sources such as several site visits made by the author in the spring of 1992. In each case, the summary should be regarded only as a point of departure for further site inspection and analysis.

Most of the entries are followed in parenthesis by their documentary source. Note that prior to 1832, many entries will contain the abbreviation CC (for Christ Church), such as "CC Vestry minutes." From 1761, when St. Peter's opened, to 1832 when the two churches separated,

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(the priest who directs the parish), is the decision-making body of lay people who oversee the parish's maintenance, finances and liturgical direction.

Christ Church on Second Street above Market Street and St. Peter's were co-equal congregations belonging to the "United Congregations of Christ Church and St. Peter's in the City of Philadelphia." During this period, the two churches shared the same rector and vestry, and consequently, the same set of record books. Following the timelines, the Appendix contains a selection of historical photographs, documents, plans and measured drawings, as well as a key to abbreviations and inventories of craftsmen and suppliers who contributed notable changes to the property.

For this project, a microfilmed set of Christ Church's parish records maintained by the Historical Society of Pennsylvania (HSP) was consulted; from 1832 onward, the various parish records, plans and photographs kept by St. Peter's Church were studied. Other essential collections included: the George B. Roberts Collection of HSP; files on St. Peter's kept by the Rev. F. Lee Richards, a former rector; the Print and Manuscript Collections of HSP; the Rare Photos and Views Collection of the Philadelphia Free Library; the Rare Book Collection of the University of Pennsylvania Library; the Philadelphia City Directory Collection of HSP; the Franklin Fire Insurance Company Collection of HSP; and the Thompson Westcott Scrapbook Collection of HSP.

A critical note of caution to all users of this study: Despite the initial promise of working with seemingly

meticulous parish records that would offer a complete portrait of an institutions's building history, that promise never was fulfilled. Many important renovations, such as early changes to the gallery staircases, were never recorded in the vestry minutes. Revealing stylistic decisions, such as the darkening of the 18th century light interior in the early 19th century, or the partial restoration of the colonial brightness in the 1870s, were also never noted by the vestry -- only historical photographs and other accounts revealed their existence. Even major decisions, such as the addition of the bell tower and spire in 1842, were rarely recorded in terms of discussion that might reveal politics, religious ideology or aesthetic preference of the actors. Many other lesser maintenance decisions, such as periodic repainting, were also inconsistently noted, if at all, and sometimes only as a cryptic line entry in the Cash Book or Accounting Warden's Book. In short, the promise of extracting a seamless chronology of architectural changes at St. Peter's proved more elusive than expected. On the other hand, the remarkable number of information gaps has been instructive in highlighting how many important decisions were actually made informally by various subcommittees of the vestry, and so left officially unrecorded in the Vestry minutes.

CHAPTER I: THE ANGLICAN ORIGINS OF ST. PETER'S PLAN

In general, St. Peter's plan resembles that of many 18th century Anglican parish churches built in England and America: an orientation on an east-west axis, a single-room, rectangular two-story space without division, gallery space for worshippers or choir, boxed pews separated by aisles that run longitudinally, clear-glass windows, a combined pulpit and reading desk (generally at the east or north ends), a wooden Holy Table set within railings against the east wall, a panelled reredos[1] behind the table, and an east window of clear glass above. The east window, in this case, took the Venetian or Palladian form common to many post-Renaissance Anglican churches.[2]

The English Reformation

St. Peter's plan and form is a function of the Low Church Anglican liturgy that prevailed from the 1660s through the 1840s in both England and America. In that sense, St. Peter's main space represents an early 18th century design solution developed in response to a liturgical approach initially prompted by the enforced English Reformation in the 1530s.

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[1] An ornamental screen or wall at the back of the altar.

[2] Friary, p. 395. The light through window not only lit the Holy Table and accentuated the chancel, but represented the rising sun that symbolized the Resurrection.

King Henry VIII's dynastically motivated break with Rome in 1534 created the state Church of England and eventually prompted the Book of Common Prayer (1549) under Edward VI as the new basis for Anglican liturgy. Thereafter followed some 130 years of English rulers swinging between Catholicism and Anglicanism before the restoration of King Charles II in 1660 brought the Book of Common Prayer back for good as the sanctioned basis for Anglican worship. That stability eventually allowed Anglican church architecture to develop its own interior schemes.

Implicit in the Prayer Book was the concept that the laity join the clergy in common prayer. Prior to the English Reformation, the Anglican service, like the Roman Catholic, had been conducted in Latin and remained more a mysterious rite for the common worshipper than a participatory act.

But direct participation by the laity required the ability to see and hear the priest, and the typical English church to this point had remained medieval in plan. Unlike the many Gothic Revival parish churches familiar to Americans from the 19th century, authentic English gothic churches lacked the openness that the Victorians adapted to the medieval scheme.[3] The initial English response was to

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[3] "The breaking up of much of the available space in the body of the church by numerous screens make it difficult for a really large number of people to worship together; even in the largest churches the aisles were partly filled with small screened-off spaces each with its altar....The Prayer Book conceives of each

remove the screens that blocked the way, but the basic plan and form of the medieval church remained intact until Inigo Jones and Christopher Wren.[4]

Clearly, a return to "corporate worship" of the early Christian Church was difficult in the average English medieval church broken up as it was by screens and "rooms" like the chancel, aisles, choir and nave.[5] Yet new church construction in the 17th century lagged because too many parish churches had already been built in the Middle Ages. In fact, Summerson says, until Queen Elizabeth's time there was almost no new church construction.[6] Still, the shifting of the service from the chancel to the nave and the gradual opening up of the interior continued through the reigns of

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service in the liturgy as the work of the whole body of the faithful; medieval churches...tended to make the faithful largely onlookers and the liturgy the peculiar and exclusive work of the clergy." G.W.O. Addleshaw and Frederick Etchells, The Architectural Setting of Anglican Worship, (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1948), p. 18-22.

[4] Through much of the 17th century (1603-1662), English church design was "an expression of Anglican belief about the Church. The use of a style, nearly always Gothic or partly Gothic, made the conservative medievalism of that belief visibly evident and explicit." John Martin Schnorrenberg, Early Anglican Architecture, 1558-1662: Its Theological Implications and Its Relation to the Continental Background, (Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1964), p. 79.

[5] Stephen P. Dorsey, Early English Churches in America: 1607-1807, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1952), p. 15-16.

[6] Summerson, Architecture in Britain, p. 173.

Elizabeth and James I.[7]

Things did not change overnight, but some of the screening devices such as parcloses[8] and family chapels within the larger churches were removed or transformed into large family pews (prototypes for the large box pews of the 17th and 18th centuries). The shrines, images, tapestries and frescoes that had accompanied medieval Roman Catholicism were also swept out -- colorful frescos that had adorned church walls were whitewashed over, elaborate high altars of stone were replaced by simple wooden Holy Tables, and pulpits were installed as new focal points of worship, reflecting the Protestant emphasis on preaching. From the Restoration until the 1830s, the pulpit would assume a position of importance co-equal to the altar in Anglican churches.[9]

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[7] During this period, the celebration of the Eucharist or Holy Communion varied from once a month to three times a year. At that time, the focus of the service shifted to the altar where the celebrants gathered to participate in the sacrament. The medieval "high altar," usually a permanent fixture of stone set against the east wall, was often discarded for a wooden Holy Table that could be moved toward the nave where the communicants could draw around the table in the style of early Christianity.

[8] "A screen enclosing a chapel or shrine and separating it from the main body of the church so as to exclude non-worshippers." John Fleming, Hugh Honour, Nikolaus Pevsner, The Penguin Dictionary of Architecture, (Harmondsworth, England, 1980), p. 237.

[9] In the Anglican service of Morning Prayer, the Word of God was heard through two separate readings or "lessons" from the Bible that were delivered from the "reading desk" where a large copy of the Holy Book was kept. The Word of God, as interpreted by the priest through the sermon, was delivered from the pulpit, normally a raised platform enclosed by a panelled railing from which the priest spoke. Since the entire service was normally taken from the

The Laudian Altar

A conservative movement, called the Laudian Revival, followed the relatively liberal reigns of Elizabeth and James I, forcing the restoration of one medieval practice. In the 1630s, during the reign of Charles I, William Laud the Archbishop of Canterbury, ordered the communion table restored to its late medieval position against the east wall. Set lengthwise, and enclosed by rails on three sides,[10] the communion table or altar became known as the Laudian altar and was frequently emphasized by a "reredos"[11] and a large east window set above it. During this period, the one unifying feature of any new English church was its lack of an apse or architectural feature that might signify a chancel. In outer form, however, English parish churches continued to be Gothic in style.

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reading desk, it is easier to understand the position it occupied in the body of the church; it had to be located where the priest could best be heard. The desk either stood alone, sometimes with the clerk's seat in front, or else combined with the pulpit and the clerk's desk to form one piece of furniture. When the reading pew and pulpit were combined, the whole structure became a two-storied pulpit; and when a clerk's desk was added, the structure became nicknamed a "three-decker." Addleshaw and Etchells, p. 75.

[10] Enclosure by railings, usually of wood or iron, was not an English innovation, but had been used widely on the Continent as early as the 1570s as a substitute for chancel screens. In practice, the railings were often adopted to prevent stray dogs from wandering into the church and urinating on the legs of the Holy Table. Addleshaw and Etchells, p. 121-122.

[11] Otherwise known as a retable: an enframed panel of wood or stone, normally carved or decorated, that was set behind the altar table against the east wall; often the Ten Commandments were inscribed on its panels.

The 1750s Plan of St. Peter's

In his study of American colonial churches, White identified at least six distinct types of experimental plans in Anglican churches of the mid-18th century.[12] Of those, St. Peter's is the oldest of two surviving churches in the country that represent the sixth type; the other is Pompion Hill Chapel in Cooper River, South Carolina, built in 1763 as a "chapel of ease" for a southern planter. In either case, the pulpit and reading desk were located at the west end, and the altar and baptismal font at the east.[13] But Pompion Hill differs from St. Peter's in its college chapel seating plan and rural tidewater setting.

The Rev. F. Lee Richards, former rector of St. Peter's (1970-1985), believes that a freer sense of churchmanship, unconstrained by the episcopal hierarchy in England, allowed St. Peter's building committee of Christ Church to dare something more unorthodox in plan.[14] His theory focuses on the liturgy of the period where two co-equal centers of worship were maintained: the pulpit for the proclamation of

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[12] James F. White, Protestant Worship and Church Architecture: Theological and Historical Considerations, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 101-105.

[13] Addleshaw cites only one English example of a pulpit and reading desk at the west end, but the church is later than St. Peter's -- built in 1782, Teigh parish church, Rutland, resembled Pompion Hill with its bench seating arranged like an English cathedral choir. [Addleshaw, p. 194-195.]

[14] His position on the subject has been understood through a series of conversations on the subject between 1991 and 1992.

the Word, and the altar or Holy Table for the celebration of the Holy Communion. At the time of St. Peter's design, the pulpit and reading desk in Christ Church were located in front of the chancel, largely blocking the view of the altar.[15] Although, in theory, the centers were co-equal, in practice the pulpit overpowered the table by blocking its view. Dr. John Kearsley and his building committee may have looked at the new church as an opportunity to correct that problem, the Rev. Richards believes. By placing the pulpit (and reading desk) at the west end, a clearer separation of the two centers would have been achieved. Each would also have been allowed greater focus architecturally with a Palladian window at the east end and elaborate panelling around the pulpit at the west end.

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[15] While this might seem somewhat sacrilegious today, it was quite orthodox in the liturgy of the 17th and 18th centuries where Morning Prayer occurred more frequently than Holy Communion. Only at the Eucharist [Holy Communion, which commemorates Christ's Last Supper] was it considered necessary to see the altar. The practice did not signify irreverence, but preserved the medieval notion of compartmented spaces where the chancel (and choir), separated by rood screens, were considered special "rooms" for the celebration of the Eucharist. [Dorsey, p. 27.] "The Church has always had to exercise a certain degree of common sense about reverence to the altar. Christians do not walk backwards out of church, and many of the congregation have their backs to the altar at a baptism. The position of the choir stalls in cathedrals and monastic churches shows that it has never been considered essential to face the altar at least for the offices." [Addleshaw, p. 89.]

CHAPTER II. HISTORICAL INFLUENCES OF ITS FORM AND STYLE

Introduction: To contemporary eyes, the form of St. Peter's appears in the abstract like a single great room -- a large rectangular block with gable roof oriented on an east-west axis.[1] This simple rectangular form is classical in derivation, based on the Roman basilica. Despite this Roman source, the classicism of St. Peter's bears an important qualification -- it is not classicism as derived from the ancient Rome of Vitruvius or the 18th century measured drawings of Athens by Stuart and Revett, but classicism as filtered through about 1,500 years of Western civilization: first through the Italian Renaissance (a somewhat murky filter due to the 1,200 years intervening), second through the English Renaissance 200 hundred years later, and then another 100 years beyond that as England established its first colonial cities in America.

The evolution may seem convoluted, but it is important to understand for, without it, the architecture of St. Peter's makes little real sense. St. Peter's often gets lumped into the "Georgian" style. While the term is useful as a dynastic category (just as "Victorian" is for the 19th century), it is descriptively useless as a style. For instance, four King Georges ruled England within the era

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[1] Discussion of the brick belltower and wooden spire are omitted for now as they are not original to the design.

called Georgian (1714 to 1820), but that same period witnessed a variety of styles in England and America, even early examples of Greek, Egyptian and Gothic Revivals.[2]

Rather, it is wiser to call St. Peter's an American colonial mode of English Renaissance architecture.[3] The Renaissance came to England rather late.[4] While Italian Renaissance architecture had already evolved into the Baroque by the early 17th century, English architecture was only slowly coming out of the late medieval mode of the Elizabethan age. In the century before, from Henry VIII's ascension in 1509 to the early reign of Elizabeth I (1558-1603), four powerful forces began the transformation of the nation's architecture, ultimately affecting the style of 18th century Anglican churches like St. Peter's: (1) the increasing use of brick as a luxury material; (2) the profound change in architectural taste from vertical

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[2] William H. Pierson, Jr., The Colonial and Neoclassical Styles, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), p 111.

[3] As a stylistic mode, the English Renaissance has been characterized by Adolf K. Placzek as "a delightful alliance of styles based upon the adoption of late 16th century Italian classicism by an England given characteristically to restraint of expression and clarity of form." Preface to Abraham Swan's The British Architect (London: 1758), reproduced 1967 (New York: De Capo Press, 1967), p. v. Its impact on 18th century American architecture was profound, surviving through the Adamesque Federal period and the neo-classicism of the Greek Revival until finally being succeeded by the Gothic Revival in the 1840s.

[4] As Bruce Allsopp, the British historian has written, "Britain was on the edge of the Renaissance world. Her architecture was profoundly affected by the Renaissance but seldom really belonged to it. Allsopp, A History of Renaissance Architecture. (London: 1959), p. 151.

dimensions to horizontal; (3) the development of the house plan (as opposed to the castle); (4) and the scattered samples of Renaissance architecture that penetrated England and Scotland as applied decoration not from Italian sources but from France and Flanders.[5] During the reign of Henry (1509-1547), contact with Rome had been minimal. Most Englishmen of the time found their Italian sources secondhand through French and Flemish interpretations. In short, the American colonial architecture we call "Georgian" is a amalgamation of Greek and Roman architectural principles filtered through the Italian Renaissance and reinterpreted by the English in the late 17th to early 18th centuries.

Inigo Jones and St. Paul's, Covent Garden

While history is surely more complicated, historians have focused on one heroic figure, decades ahead of his Shakespearean time, who appears responsible for having brought the Italian Renaissance to English architecture. Inigo Jones (1573-1652) was the son of a Smithfield clothworker who began his career as an illustrator, and later courted royal favor (and patronage) as a stage designer. Later, as Surveyor of the King's Works for James I, Jones designed the first Renaissance-inspired buildings in England, breaking the mold of Jacobean architecture

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[5] Allsopp, p. 153.

during the first half of the 17th century.[6] "The result," said Placzek, "was a delightful alliance of styles based

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[6] The event which probably changed the course of English architecture was his visit to Italy in 1614 in the company of Lord Arundel. Jones studied the ancient Roman ruins firsthand and acquired a copy of Andrea Palladio's Four Books of Architecture (1570). First published in 1570 (republished in London in 1738), this book served as England's primer in the 17th and 18th centuries for a Renaissance-age vision of ancient Rome. As such, it did not provide entire patterns to complete a building, but served as a guide for general rules of proportion and composition.

Palladio (1508-80) had been one of Italy's greatest architects of the mid-16th century -- "the last of the great Humanist architects" -- who is credited for synthesizing various Renaissance ideas, such as symmetrical planning and the harmony of proportions, gleaned from the Romans. [Marvin Trachtenberg and Isabelle Hyman, Architecture: From Prehistory to Post-Modernism/The Western Tradition, (Harry N. Abrams, B.V., 1986), p. 319.] Much of Palladio's theory was based on Leon Battista Alberti's De Re Aedificatoria (1485) and on the writings of the Roman architect, Marcus Pollio Vitruvius (active 46-30 B.C.), whose work was first published in 1486. Vitruvius's Ten Books of Architecture was the only architectural treatise to survive from ancient Rome. Although written obscurely, Palladio and his generation interpreted Vitruvius as the authentic "Voice of Antiquity." [Adolf K. Placzek, "Introduction of Dover Edition," Reprint of Isaac Ware's 1738 London edition of Andrea Palladio's Four Books of Architecture, (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1965), p. vi.]

Palladio believed that a set of architectural principles, a universal vocabulary of architectural form based on ancient Roman design, was both necessary and achievable. He proposed that a set of absolute standards -- of "immutable canons" -- could survive across time and be endlessly reapplied by successive generations. Jones idolized Palladio and soon after his return home designed the first classically-inspired building in England, the Queen's House in Greenwich (1615-1635). However, England's slow awakening to Jones's new direction first actually occurred in 1622 after his completion of Banqueting House at Whitehall (1619-1622). Despite its novelty to English eyes, Jones's design looked to the past, to the Italian Renaissance of the middle 1500s, not to the Italian Baroque of his day. The Hall represented the first fully realized classical building in England. Jones produced his early work during the reign of James I (1603-1625), but England had to wait until the Puritan Revolution and the Interregnum (1649-1660) had passed before a "full fledged" English Renaissance style took hold with the restoration of the English monarchy. [George B. Tatum, Philadelphia Georgian: The City House of Samuel Powel and Some of Its Eighteenth Century Neighbors, (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1976), p. 33.]

upon the adoption of late 16th century Italian classicism by an England given characteristically to restraint of expression and clarity of form."[7]

In 1630-31, Jones designed a remarkable church that may be considered the English prototype for St. Peter's, Philadelphia: St. Paul's, Covent Garden, became the first new church built in London since the Reformation and represented a revolutionary departure from English Gothic design. Prior to this time, Jones had built only one other church -- the Queen's Chapel (1623-27) at St. James Palace, London.[8] It too was decades ahead of its time, and would eventually influence English church design in the late 17th century through the work of Sir Christopher Wren. The chapel's single-most extraordinary feature, which would affect St. Peter's (and Christ Church before it), was the large clear-glass Palladian window at the east end. This was a powerful new use in England of the Palladian (or Serlian or Venetian) opening for the chancel window, and would reappear in churches by Wren and James Gibbs.[9]

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[7] Adolf K. Placzek, Preface to Abraham Swan's The British Architect (London: 1758), reproduced 1967, (New York: De Capo Press, 1967), p. v.

[8] Commissioned by the future king, Prince Charles, for his Spanish Catholic queen-to-be, who he never married, Queen's Chapel was the first Italian Renaissance-inspired church in England. Ironically, the chapel was intended for Roman Catholic service.

[9] In this feature, Jones borrowed from the occasional practice of Vincenzo Scamozzi (1552-1616), a Baroque-Age follower of Palladio, who had inserted the three-part window in some of his Italian churches. [Summerson, Architecture in Britain, p. 130.]

St. Paul's was built as the parish church for a geometrically-planned townhouse development in London. Set within the scheme's public square, the church took the shape of a large basilica, albeit with a large Tuscan portico on the east end.[10] The interior formed a simple rectangular cell with no apse. The sanctuary is believed to have held galleries on three sides that were lit by large round-headed windows. Little else is known about the interior since the church was gutted by fire in 1795. While the exterior was faithfully restored, the interior became "a neat but uninteresting Georgian box."[11] However, its box-like classicism and economy of ornament created a powerful precedent for English ecclesiastical design as the Anglican Church entered the Age of Reason.

The classical churches of Inigo Jones remained the rare exceptions to England's Gothic convention for the next 30 to 40 years. Classicism would simply not be accepted for

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[10] Summerson believes that Jones's choice of the Tuscan order, the most primitive of the five classical orders, was meant to signify both economy of design and the reformist character of Protestantism at a time when the break with Catholicism was far from resolved. The Earl of Bedford, who bankrolled the development, was not a High Churchman and would have been pleased with its simplicity. Bedford reputedly told Jones to build an inexpensive church no more costly than a barn. Jones reputedly replied, "You shall have the handsomest barn in England." [Summerson, Inigo Jones, p. 87.]

[11] Summerson, Inigo Jones, p. 95. Schnorrenberg believes even more strongly that the significance of St. Paul's interior is difficult to assess since the building had also been remodeled several times before the fire. Besides, Schnorrenberg argues, "theological problems were probably irrelevant" to Jones.

Anglican churches until after the Restoration of the Stuarts; and even then, the classicism of Wren that followed was baroque as compared to the more correct Palladianism of Jones. Presumably, England would have produced another figure to prod its architecture out of the Middle Ages, but Inigo Jones is still generally credited as the catalyst. This transition toward Renaissance classicism would eventually follow English migration to the New World and take root as an Americanized classical style in the Georgian, Federal and Greek Revival styles. As a result, the architecture of St. Peter's and other similar English colonial churches would not look as they do today without the formative influence of Inigo Jones.

Christopher Wren and the London "Auditory" Churches

While Jones may have purified English Renaissance architecture, Sir Christopher Wren (1662-1723) widened its range of possibility through the late 17th century. With the return of King Charles II to the English throne (1660-1685), Wren soon became England's leading church designer; and with the cultural liberalization of that period, Wren was freed to draw from Italian Baroque sources that would have drawn censure before.[12] In essence, Wren enjoyed the

[12] Wren was a brilliant man of science trained as a mathematician and astronomer. He held the same position in the court of Charles II that Jones had held earlier in the century. Wren's understanding of Renaissance and Baroque design came not from trips to Italy, but from a long stay in Paris and from books

freedom to manipulate classic forms and details without strict adherence to classic plans. This was especially true for his church steeples, heretofore a strictly Gothic form, which he classicized in a completely original manner.[13]

Wren made several important changes to traditional medieval church design. Like Inigo Jones, he responded to the participatory liturgy of the English Reformation that required interiors where all assembled could see and hear. He abandoned the medieval cruciform with its long narrow

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and drawings. Wren probably would have remained a historical scientific figure were it not for a cataclysmic fire in 1666 that destroyed the medieval center of London and 87 parish churches. This was the famous fire that so impressed William Penn, in England at the time, that when he planned the development of Philadelphia almost two decades later, he ordered new construction be made of brick as a fire retardant.

The old center of London in 1666 was largely a crowded medieval city of wood-frame construction. Wren developed a master plan to rebuild the city along modern lines but the scheme was defeated by vested property interests. Instead, he was left with the almost greater task of replacing the destroyed churches, each with its own peculiar site. In the process, Wren produced a body of ecclesiastical architecture unlike anything the country had seen, with the exception of Inigo Jones's two classical churches. In the same building campaign between 1670 and 1686, Wren also began his masterpiece, St. Paul's Cathedral (1675-1709), England's largest church comparable in monumentality to St. Peter's, Rome.

Wren's 51 parish churches in London were a revelation. They represented the first consistent marriage of the classical vocabulary introduced by Jones with the spatial needs of the Anglican liturgy at the turn of the 18th century. Their prominence in the capital city helped establish classicism as the new norm for English (and colonial) church architecture until the reaction of the Oxford Movement in the late 1830s. Marcus Whiffen, Stuart and Georgian Churches Outside London, 1603-1837, (London: B.T. Batsford Ltd., 1947), p. 14.

[13] His first great classical steeple was for St. Mary-le-Bow, Cheapside, London (1670-77). Like the Gothic approach, the structure stood as an adjunct to the main body of the church, a model that would be followed in the 18th century for numerous parish churches both in England and the colonies.

nave and deep chancel separated by screens. In its place, he substituted an open single-room space based on classical proportions akin to a Roman basilica. As Pierson notes, the space was decidedly "anti-Gothic."[14] Calling his plan "auditory," Wren adapted it to a variety of irregular sites for the large group of London parish churches he designed between 1670-1686.[15] Often configured as a large, rectangular space, its open dimensions and galleries on two or three sides probably were inspired by St. Paul's, Covent Garden, by Inigo Jones.[16]

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[14] William H. Pierson, Jr., American Buildings and Their Architects, v. 1: The Colonial and Neoclassical Styles, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 68-69. While the plans for the London churches varied widely, many were based in dimension upon the ancient Roman basilica, a form that had become familiar to the English following the Norman Conquest of 1066; the form of the Norman church was basilican. Initially, Wren had planned to design masonry vaulting into his churches, but limited funding nixed that approach. Instead, he devised light wood and plaster structures based on Roman models that created sculptural ceiling vaults. Lit by large clear-paned windows, and often painted white or gilded with brilliant colors, their luminous interiors epitomized the Age of Enlightenment casting out the shadows of the Middle Ages. In historic context, Wren's freedom to manipulate the once sacrosanct space of the medieval church reflected his era's revolutionary embrace of Science and the new metaphysics of Descartes and Sir Isaac Newton.

[15] In a letter to the government commissioners charged with overseeing construction of the new London churches, Wren outlined his concept for the "auditory" plan: a capacity of no more than 2,000 people, rectangular dimensions of no less then 60 x 90 ft., with gallery seating and bench-type pews. Ironically, Wren didn't like box pews, which have come to be associated with Wrenian 18th century churches. Instead, he preferred open (and free) benches, which he believed were less socially exclusive than rented (and therefore private) box pews.

[16] The British historian Eduard Sekler believes that Wren consciously looked to Jones. Yet Summerson believes that in the genealogy of influence on early 18th century English churches, Wren

Wren also first adapted Jones's Palladian window from the Queen's Chapel to St. James, Picadilly, London (1676-84). Considered by Wren to be his model city parish church, St. James contained features that would reappear in somewhat modified form in Christ Church, Philadelphia (1727-44), including the rectangular plan with side aisles, the barrel-vaulted plaster ceilings, the Palladian east window, the side galleries supported by classical columns, and the appended bell tower and steeple.[17]

On larger scale, Wren even influenced much of the character of early colonial English architecture in America. As Pierson writes, "the style of American architecture during the first half of the 18th century is wholly and enthusiastically Wrenian Baroque developed entirely at the low and folk-style levels."[18]

James Gibbs and St. Martin's in the Field

After Wren, James Gibbs (1682-1754) emerged as the next

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comes first. [John Summerson, Architecture in Britain: 1530-1830, (New York: Penguin Books, 1953), p. 317.]

[17] Despite these outward emulations of Wren, Charles Peterson believes that "while the various design motifs at Philadelphia are familiar..., the church as a whole is not a copy of anything known to have been built in England." He suspects that the plans for Christ Church, and its brick masons, were imported from England by Dr. John Kearsley. [Charles E. Peterson, "The Building of Christ Church, Philadelphia," 1981 Antiques Show catalog, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Hospital Antiques Show, 1981), p. 135.]

[18] Pierson, p. 69.

leading figure in English 18th century church architecture.[19] In America, Gibbs's influence proved an even greater than Jones and Wren, due largely to the widely read design books he published.[20] One remarkably influential design, illustrated in detail in his A Book of Architecture, was St. Martin's in the Field (1722-26).[21] With its light plaster vaulting and galleries, the design was derived from Wren's London churches, yet the church also contained important differences -- most important was its monumentality. Unlike the intimacy of Wren's churches, which fit contextually into their sites, St. Martin's was designed to stand out.[22]

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[19] Having studied in Rome under the architect Carlo Fontana, Gibbs flourished despite his Italian Baroque background. A Scottish Roman Catholic and a Tory with Jacobite sympathies, Gibbs became England's most influential church designer in the early 18th century, despite the dominance of the Whig party and the ascendancy of the neo-Palladian school. The secret to his success, Pierson believes, was that Gibbs "perfected" the architecture of Wren. [Pierson, p. 179.] By that, he means that Gibbs was eclectic (and shrewd) enough to adapt popular elements of Baroque and Palladian design from both Wren and Jones.

[20] Marcus Whiffen cites two books by Gibbs that were available in major colonial cities like Philadelphia: A Book of Architecture (1728), and Rules for Drawing the Several Parts of Architecture (1732). The Book of Architecture was particularly popular, enjoying numerous reprints, and was read and copied throughout England and the colonies.

[21] St. Martin's was Gibbs most frequently imitated church, due largely to three factors: its wide accessibility through A Book of Architecture, the snob appeal of its parish's association with aristocratic Westminster, and the attractiveness of its style, which evoked the London churches of Wren. [Whiffen, p. 41.]

[22] Pierson contends that St. Martin's influenced the design of all important city churches built in the colonies after 1750. In fact, he traces a direct line between the aristocratic St. Martin's

Donald Friary, in his study of Anglican church architecture in the northern American colonies, believes that the English model for St. Peter's was Marybone Chapel, Oxford, well illustrated in Gibbs's Book of Architecture.[23] Designed in 1721-24 for the Earl of Oxford, Gibbs acknowledged in his Introduction that it is a "plain brick building."[24] Indeed, in its plainness, accented only by corner quoins of brick, the design bears a remarkable resemblance to St. Peter's in many significant ways including: the rectangular form capped by a gable roof with simple block dentil molding, the location, shape and size of its windows, the Palladian window at the east wall, the oculus window in the pediments, the relatively simple barrel vault ceiling, and the large urns located at the four corners of the roof (originally intended for St. Peter's but omitted). The availability of Gibbs's Book of Architecture

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and the final form of equally aristocratic Christ Church as it evolved between 1727 and 1754 with the completion of the bell tower. [Pierson, p. 136.] It is clear that the parish of Christ Church was aware of the very smallest details concerning St. Martin's -- a vestry minute from 1744 noted that because the pews in St. Martin's were 2 ft, 9 inches deep, those in Christ Church should be the same. [Parker, p. 9]

[23] Donald Richard Friary, The Architecture of the Anglican Church in the Northern American Colonies: A Study of Religious, Social, and Cultural Expression, Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation in American Civilization. University of Pennsylvania. 1971. Friary adds that St. Peter's, as the oldest of a regional group of churches sharing a similar refinement, may have acted as the model for this regional type of Anglican church in the Delaware Valley such as St. James, Kingsessing.

[24] James Gibbs, A Book of Architecture Containing Designs of Buildings and Ornaments, (London, 1728), p. vi.

in Philadelphia in the 1750s strongly suggests Marybone Chapel as the primary model for St. Peter's.

Neo-Palladianism and Architectural Handbooks

Gibbs was not alone in combining self-promotion with architecture. After the crowning of George I in 1714, English Baroque architecture, as represented by Gibbs and Wren, became rejected by an anti-Stuart Whig aristocracy. By the middle of Gibbs's career, roughly a century after Inigo Jones, his Roman-based classicism was contending with a revival of Palladio's Italian Renaissance style.

A gifted amateur architect, Richard Boyle, Third Earl of Burlington (1694-1753), had become "patron and high priest" of this Palladian revival following a trip to Italy in 1715.[25] On his return to England, Burlington fired Gibbs as architect for Burlington House in London and hired Colen Campbell (1676-1729), a little known architect who had just published the self-promotional Vitruvius Britannicus (1715). Filled with late 17th century English country mansions in Jones's Renaissance mode, the book was a tribute to Palladio and Inigo Jones. Burlington, through his enormous influence in the court of George I, and through protégés like William Kent (1685-1748) and Campbell, succeeded in making Neo-Palladianism dominate England's

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[25] Dictionary of Architecture, p. 53.

architectural scene until the mid-1700s.[26]

Philadelphia Architecture at Mid-Century

During this same period, the city of Philadelphia served as the cultural capital of the English colonies. Despite that distinction and its substantial concentration of wealthy merchants, the city failed to attract leading architects from England, being largely perceived as a provincial backwater in Europe. Instead, the city relied on professional builders whose design work was largely derivative. In the absence of trained architects, builders fashioned buildings much as they do today, through time-tested construction methods, conventional sourcebooks, and styles common to their age. For the vast majority of buildings erected, this tradition was as true in the colonies as it was in England.

The difference was that the colonies, cut off from firsthand exposure to the latest trends, more frequently relied upon illustrated books of design commonly known as

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[26] John Summerson, Architecture in Britain: 1530-1830, (New York: Penguin Books, 1953) p. 317. Summerson calls this period the "Rule of Taste" (1710-1750) because a small but influential group of architects and nobility aligned with Burlington impressed a rigid set of design conventions upon English architecture. Other than Italian classicism, the Palladian school rejected most things foreign, which translated into a distaste for anything Baroque that Wren or Gibbs might design.

handbooks or pattern books.[27] The drawback was that the designs in these books generally represented out-of-date fashions from England. But few other means existed for colonialists to remain contemporary other than information gleaned through personal accounts or newspapers. In effect, colonial architecture was often dated by a decade or more at the time it was completed.[28] This phenomenon is crucial to understanding the architecture of St. Peter's Church. In

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[27] At the vernacular level, handbooks (and later magazines) remained enormously influential through the 19th century. For example, Victorian carpenters relied on their patterns to guide jigsaws around Gothic Revival ornament. In the 18th century, the builders handbook was ubiquitous, popularized by a century-long building boom in England and the colonies. A host of publications appeared, ranging from the 18th century version of a splashy coffee-table book meant to entice the gentleman-client, to basic primers for carpenters needing tips for moldings. With the colonies' relative isolation, demand here for the books was great. Among the more prolific English authors were Batty Langley (1696-1751), the son of a gardener who produced more than 25 builders handbooks; William Halfpenny (d. 1755), who published more than 20 books; William Pain, who published over 10 in the late 1700s; and Abraham Swan, a carpenter-joiner who produced four.

[28] For example, Abraham Swan's British Architect promoted Neo-Palladianism, but was first published in 1745, around the time this mode was declining in England. Like other Neo-Palladian books, such as Batty Langley's Treasury of Design, Swan was reprinted in 1750 with a third edition in 1758. Remarkably, a generation after first appearing in England, Swan was reprinted in Philadelphia in 1775, becoming the first handbook published in America. By that year, the more refined Adamesque classical mode was poised to replace the heavier Georgian in America, becoming known as the Federal style. [Adolf K. Placzek, Preface to the De Capo Press reprint of The British Architect by Abraham Swan (London: 1758), (New York: De Capo Press, 1967), p. vi.] In a sense, the dynamic at work here was no different from today or any age when the leading designers or technological innovators were often years or generations ahead of their time. Only years later, does the mainstream of culture shift to the new direction, often to remain there (especially at the folklore vernacular level) for generations until the next major trend or innovation filters through the culture and the mainstream shifts again.

the early 1700s, the appearance of design books promoting the Neo-Palladianism of Lord Burlington created a "quiet revolution" in English architecture that spread to Philadelphia by the 1740s.[29]

Philadelphia's situation at mid-century was a perfect example of the stylistic time lag. In his study of The Carpenters' Company of Philadelphia, Moss found that a lapse of 10 or more years generally occurred between English publication and a book's appearance here. That gap closed considerably as the century advanced.[30]

Despite Burlington's revival, Philadelphia never fully

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[29] Roger W. Moss, Jr., "The Origins of the Carpenters' Company of Philadelphia," Charles E. Peterson, editor, Building Early America: Contributions Toward the History of a Great Industry, (Radnor: Chilton Book Co., 1976), p. 48-50.

[30] "The Carpenters' Company of the City and County of Philadelphia" descended from a London carpenters' guild formed in the Middle Ages as a fraternal charitable society. By the late 17th century, however, the guild had lost most of its power as a trade association. The founding of Philadelphia in the 1680s proved to be a bonanza for many unemployed English carpenters, and eventually led to this small but very influential trade guild in provincial Philadelphia. Moss says The Carpenters' Company was created on the same model as "The Worshipful Company of Carpenters" in London "to regulate their craft in the face of rapid, competitive expansion." But, like their medieval predecessors, the Philadelphians failed, at least by formal standards. On an informal level, however, The Company exercised influence far beyond its relatively small number by functioning as middlemen between the 18th century's rich and powerful and the rest of the building trades. They accomplished this by dominating the key middle-rank government posts in the city associated with construction regulation, like building inspector for public works, and cost estimator for public and private projects. "United by family and craft, led by their colleagues well placed in government and society, with considerable power over smaller crafts that depended upon the Master Builder for subcontracts, The Company gradually developed a firm grip on building in colonial Philadelphia." [Ibid., p. 47-48]

disassociated itself from Wren's Baroque mode due to three factors: the influence of James Gibbs's design books, the conservative nature of provincial cultural life, and the influence of the Carpenters Company. Philadelphians either seemed to accept the more severe Palladian mode half-heartedly or tempered it to local taste. It is this hybrid local style, appearing after 1750 and exemplified by St. Peter's, that Pierson calls the first genuine "Georgian" architecture in the colonies.[31]

Tatum calls this the "middle period" (c.1750-1780) of Georgian architecture in Philadelphia, beginning with Edmund Woolley's design for the State House bell tower (1750-53), later rebuilt by William Strickland in 1828, and extending through other landmarks like the east wing of Pennsylvania Hospital (1755) at Eighth and Pine Streets, Mt. Pleasant in Fairmount Park (1761), Cliveden in Germantown (1763), the Powel House (1765) at 244 S. 3rd St, and Carpenters' Hall (1770) at 320 Chestnut St.[32]

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[31] Pierson, p. 117. Indeed, Pierson believes that the Palladianism of Burlington influenced the colonies only indirectly, and that as a general observation -- Neo-Palladian pattern books notwithstanding -- most colonial architecture found its models secondhand in more modest middle-class versions of the grander English country house. His argument seems valid for middle-class domestic architecture, but it does not seem to apply for wealthy Anglican parishes in capital cities like Philadelphia by the 1750s.

[32] Tatum, p. 38.

CHAPTER III: ROLES AND SIGNIFICANCE OF ITS BUILDERS AND RENOVATORS

Robert Smith: 1758-1764 Architect-Builder

Robert Smith (1722-1777) began construction on St. Peter's in the fall of 1758 in the prime of his career.[1] Called "the most important architect-builder in colonial America," Smith had already earned the status of master builder at age 36, and entered the inner circle of the Carpenters' Company.[2]

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[1] Charles E. Peterson, "Robert Smith, Philadelphia Builder-Architect: From Dalkeith to Princeton," Scotland and America in the Age of Enlightenment, edited by Richard B. Sher and Jeffrey R. Smitten. (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, 1990), p. 275.

[2] Born in Scotland, the son of a baker from rural Dalkeith Parish outside of Edinburgh, Smith came to America about 1748 after apprenticing with master builders in Scotland and England. Little information exists of his early life, and little evidence remains of his career other than his buildings. No known portrait or description survives, nor of his drawings, and his remaining correspondence is slim. Despite this, Charles Peterson, who has dedicated much of his life to studying Smith, believes that he may have received his early architectural training in Edinburgh about 1740 when the noted builder William Adam and his equally distinguished sons were remodeling the estate of a local nobleman. It also seems clear that Smith and the Adam's brothers attended elementary school together.

Once in the English colonies, Smith worked everywhere from Rhode Island to Virginia. His major Philadelphia projects included the Second (1749) and Third (1766) Presbyterian churches, the steeple for Christ Church (1752-54), the east wing of Pennsylvania Hospital (1755), St. Paul's Episcopal Church (1761), a house for Benjamin Franklin (1764), Carpenters' Hall (1768), alterations to the dormitory and provost's house for the University of Pennsylvania (1761), and the Walnut Street Prison (1773-74). Many of these rank among the most important buildings in Philadelphia at the time. In 1768, Smith was selected to design and build the new hall for the Carpenters Company, a commission that alone reflected the high regard his fellow builder members held for him. [Ibid, p. 275 +]

Besides his obvious importance as the builder-architect of St. Peter's, Smith should be recognized as a significant figure in the genealogy of American architecture. In the 18th century colonies, the role of architect-as-professional did not yet exist. Instead, master builders, like Smith and other similar members of the Carpenters' Company, functioned as the designers of buildings.[3]

Smith and his peers in the Carpenters' Company clearly were influenced by English Palladianism as it was understood through the architectural handbooks of their day. Largely through these books they knew the English work of Inigo Jones, John Vanbrugh, John Webb, and Colen Campell (the last three being prominent figures in the Neo-Palladian revival of the early 18th century).[4] Smith owned his own copy of Vitruvius Britannicus, purchased in 1756, and Palladio's The Four Books of Architecture, purchased in 1754. Other known books in his library included Batty Langley's The City and

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[3] Master builders of national stature like Smith prefigured the changes that occurred in the building industry from the 1790s onward with the arrival of European-trained figures like Benjamin Latrobe (1764-1820) and in 1810 with John Haviland (1792-1852). These men helped train the first generation of Americans, like William Strickland (1788-1854), Robert Mills (1781-1855) and later, Thomas U. Walter (1804-1887), who would eventually be recognized in the early 19th century as professionals distinct from their somewhat nebulous former status as master builders. It would also mark the early beginnings of American architecture in its own right, although a true American style would have to wait until the latter half of the century.

[4] If Smith apprenticed to William Adam in the early 1740s in Scotland, as Charles Peterson believes, he would have been exposed firsthand to the Neo-Palladian school.

Country Builder's Treasury of Designs, purchased in 1751. Smith was a friend of David Hall, who imported large numbers of pattern books in the 1760s. Very likely, Smith also owned James Gibbs's A Book of Architecture or had easy access to it.[5] Books like these guided Smith and his colleagues in an age when architecture was based on historical precedent.[6]

Most historians who have studied the church have attempted to answer the question, "Who designed the building?" Was it the building committee from Christ Church chaired by Dr. John Kearsley or was it Robert Smith? Early studies of 18th century architecture in America traditionally give credit to the gentleman-client, who may

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[5] Tatman and Moss, The Biographical Dictionary of Philadelphia Architects: 1700-1930, (Boston, G.K. Hall & Co., 1985), p. 742.

[6] Charles Peterson believes that Smith's model for the tower and steeple (1753) of Christ Church may have come from William Adam's collection of engraved plates that Smith may have brought with him to America in 1748 (and much later published as Vitruvius Scoticus, 1746 onward. This presumes, of course, that Smith actually knew the Adam family). [Peterson, Scotland and America, p. 292.] Leland Roth and Garvan believe, on the other hand, that Christ Church's steeple was adapted from a series of alternative designs for St. Martin's in the Field illustrated in James Gibbs's Book of Architecture (1728); the latter source seems more likely to me. The Philadelphia builder, Edmund Woolley, who probably designed and built the Pennsylvania State House (1732-), also designed and built its tower and steeple (1751-53). His design source could have been either of two models: Gibbs's tower and steeple for Marybone Chapel in Book of Architecture (1728) or Adam's own copy of the chapel's tower for the Aberdeen Hospital (1732-), also printed for Vitruvius Scoticus (this collection of plates were printed from 1746 onward, but not in single-volume book form until 1812, Peterson notes.) Garvan also believes that Smith based his Walnut Street Jail (1773-74) on the drawing in Vitruvius Scoticus for the Orphan's Hospital (1734-36) in Edinburgh. [Garvan, Three Centuries, p. 124.]

have dabbled in design and owned imported architecture books. But in his essay on the Carpenters' Company of Philadelphia, Roger Moss dismisses the gentleman-as-designer notion as 19th century romantic "myth".[7] While gentleman clients did indeed oversee projects (e.g., Andrew Hamilton for the Pennsylvania State House and John Kearsley for Christ Church), Moss believes the actual design should be credited to the master builder: "The supervisor was doubtless consulted, and he probably carried the plans back to his principals for discussion and approval. But the ultimate form and, especially the final details, were the result of the knowledge and skill of the Master Builder and his crew of workmen."[8]

Certainly, Robert Smith's architectural ability is not in doubt; he is credited with designing many of the region's major buildings during the mid-18th century.[9] But George Tatum has suggested that the instructions given Smith by St.

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[7] Moss, p. 39.

[8] Ibid., p. 41.

[9] Charles Peterson believes that if Smith had been formally apprenticed as a carpenter in Edinburgh, he would have been trained in the Renaissance style of Palladio. The apprenticeship would have required a familiarity with both measured drawings and the arrangement of the classical orders. Whether Smith learned those skills in Scotland, or later, remains uncertain, but he certainly mastered drawing at some point in his career, since examples of his work were included posthumously in the country's first known public exhibition of architectural drawings in 1795. [Jeffrey A. Cohen, "Early American Architectural Drawings and Philadelphia, 1730-1860," Drawing Toward Building: Philadelphia Architectural Graphics, 1732-1986, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986), p. 20.]

Peter's building committee were so detailed that its design "can hardly be said to be his."[10] Indeed, the building contract, signed Aug. 5, 1758, clearly specifies the form, details and materials of St. Peter's largely as it is known today (the bell tower would not be added until 1842). The only elements omitted by the contract concerned interior fittings such as the galleries, pews, panelling, chancel rails, the pulpit, and the reading desk.[11] Church records indicate, however, that Smith was charged with making the chancel rails, the pulpit, and the reading desk; presumably, he designed them as well.

Perhaps the larger question that remains to be answered is: Did Smith collaborate with Kearsley's building committee in writing the contract, or was it the sole creation of the committee? While the contract clearly specified that Smith "from time to time hereafter...be under the direction and instruction of the said Committee touching and concerning the said [church building]...," it seems far more likely that he maintained substantial creative input in the process. His first known commission, the Second Presbyterian Church (1749) at Third Street on Arch (demolished), bore many similarities to St. Peter's, suggesting that Smith reused his basic design for the

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[10] Tatum, p. 51.

[11] See the Appendix, p. 205, for a transcription of the contract.

Anglicans nine years later.[12]

An argument could be made that some sort of disagreement over the church's design occurred within the parish. St. Peter's was originally conceived of as a "chapel of ease"[13] -- at least that is how the aging rector, the Rev. Robert Jenney, characterized it in his lukewarm support for the project in 1753.[14] One suggestion of a rift

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[12] The building bears the same rectangular form and gable roof with many of the conventions found on St. Peter's including a plain brick facade, a simple dentiled cornice, a round window in the gable, brick pilasters at each corners [in a slight variation built as quoins on St. Peter's], a Palladian window, and roof urns [as the original contract called for]. Of especial interest is the fenestration -- St. Peter's original contract called for larger windows on the ground floor like Second Presbyterian. This basic design would be used by Smith a third time in 1766-69 for the Zion Lutheran Church on Fourth above Arch Street (demolished).

[13] In the English sense, a "chapel of ease" functioned as a smaller auxiliary building tied directly to a mother church, both theologically and financially. In its final form, St. Peter's, indeed, resembled a simple English parish church, clearly subordinate to the more richly appointed Christ Church; its footprint (60 x 90 ft), was also 25 percent smaller than Christ Church's (61 x 118 ft). In his dedicatory sermon for the church on Sept. 4, 1761, the Rev. Dr. William Smith, provost of the College of Pennsylvania, called the new building "not a superb and magnificent one, fitted to the ostentatious worship at the Lord, but a House decently neat and elegantly plain."

[14] It had also been characterized as such by the Rev. Richard Peters, who would succeed Jenney as rector, in a letter written in 1749 to the Penn Proprietors. No doubt, the wishes of the aged Rev. Jenney, who was becoming enfeebled by the 1750s, were largely ignored by the vestry, which appears to have controlled the parish during this period. [Parker, Archives, p. 9] But other evidence indicates that the vestry was largely "Low Church" and would have supported a simple design for liturgical if not financial reasons. It is telling that when "some gentlemen from the South End of the City" went to see Jenney in March 1753 about building a new church, they did not seek his consent, but rather informed him politely of their intentions and requested that he put the matter before the vestry. Jenney feared that the congregation, and his influence, would be fractured, but the "South End" group went ahead.

concerns the window arrangement, which was changed as the church walls were going up: the larger rounded windows were placed at the gallery level and the smaller windows placed at the first floor -- the reverse of Christ Church. This switch may have been insignificant, reflecting a practical need to allow more light into the church, but it also may have reflected an intra-parish disagreement over how prominent this Anglican chapel of ease should appear in relation to its mother church.[15] The new arrangement may have involved a conscious architectural reference to James Gibbs's Marybone Chapel, itself a chapel of ease, but connected to an aristocratic parish in Oxford.[16] Perhaps, the wealthy and influential parishioners, who lived at the "south end" and had petitioned for a new church, expected that the building would be understated for financial as well

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[Jefferys, Provincial History, p. 14-15.]

[15] Research into the question of why the Penn family refused to contribute to the building fund might shed light on this possible intra-Anglican rift. Although the Penns eventually did grant the land for the site, they stalled for three years and then refused to help with construction donations. Resentment lingered for years within the parish; nothing symbolized this better than the cartouche or shield set within the broken pediment above the pulpit. The shield had been intended for the heraldry of the Penn family, but was not painted until 1950, long after resentment had died out in the parish.

[16] Certainly, this kind of associational game had been played by John Kearsley and his building committee in the late 1720s when they designed Christ Church, which was based in large measure on the London churches of Wren and Gibbs. It certainly was the case when they hired Robert Smith in 1751 to add a wooden steeple, which was likely adapted from alternative models for St. Martin's in the Field from Gibbs's A Book of Architecture (1727).

as hierarchical reasons, yet appear recognizably Anglican.

William Strickland: 1842 Tower and Spire

In 1818 at the age of 30, William Strickland (1788-1854), a former pupil of Latrobe, won the commission for Nicholas Biddle's Second Bank of the United States (1818-24). This bank, a stripped-down version of a Greek Temple based on the Parthenon, gave Strickland immediate recognition as one of the fresh young architects in the nation.[17] In the tradition of 18th century builders like Robert Smith, Strickland relied upon a design book for guidance in approaching classicism correctly -- in this instance, Strickland employed Stuart and Revett's Antiquities of Athens (1762 & 1789) as the basis for the Second Bank and much of his work to follow.[18] But like his mentor Latrobe, he imaginatively combined Roman spatial interior forms with a Greek facade. Strickland's other

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[17] The son of a master carpenter who came to Philadelphia from New Jersey around 1790, William Strickland was apprenticed at 15 to the English-trained architect Benjamin Latrobe through connections of his father. The young, temperamental Strickland served under Latrobe for two years, learning the basics of engineering and architecture, before leaving his master at age 17 to work as a scene designer. Strickland is now categorized as a member of that early line of American architects, beginning with his teacher Benjamin Latrobe and extending through to Robert Mills and T.U. Walter, who regarded themselves as the American pioneers of the profession. [Agnes Addison Gilchrist, William Strickland: Architect and Engineer, 1877-1854, 1950, Rev. Edit., (New York: De Capo Press, 1969), p. 4.]

[18] John Andrew Gallery, editor, Philadelphia Architecture: A Guide to the City, (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1984), p. 131.

outstanding buildings in Philadelphia include the U.S. Naval Asylum (1827-33) and his Merchants' Exchange (1832-33).

Some historians of the Greek Revival believe that the Second Bank marked a turning point in American architecture, ushering out the 18th century red-brick classicism of Robert Smith's Philadelphia and introducing the early 19th century white-stone neo-classicism of the Greek Revival. For better or worse, the bank also set the mold for Strickland's career. While Strickland may have worked competently in nine different revival styles, he is now remembered largely for the Greek Revival buildings created between 1818 and 1845.

The bell tower for St. Peter's, devised in his colonial revival style, was built using traditional methods involving thick load-bearing brick walls and heavy wooden joists.[19] In this regard, the addition respected the existing construction methods and materials of the original. While Strickland had already explored the new structural uses for iron in his previous works, he generally relied on conventional thick masonry construction.[20]

Strickland presumably won the bell-tower commission

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[19] Since support of the project was not unanimous within the parish, the approach in some part may have reflected the desire of St. Peter's building committee to economize. The vestry wished to keep the addition budgeted at $4,000. See the protest of vestryman William Phillips entered Feb. 10, 1842 in the vestry minutes. Phillips noted the parish's outstanding debt of $1,600 in addition to a $1,300 mortgage.

[20] Strickland had utilized iron structurally for the U.S. Naval Asylum in 1826, and again in 1842. [Gilchrist, p. 30.]

from St. Peter's because of personal connections within the parish and his name recognition in Philadelphia.[21] His introduction to the building committee probably came via James Biddle, a member of the parish and commodore of the U.S. Naval Asylum, which Strickland had completed nine years earlier and was then expanding. He also had established a reputation for accurate cost estimates, well-designed and engineered buildings, insistence upon quality materials, and an ability to meet deadlines that must have impressed the committee.[22]

When Strickland accepted the job from St. Peter's in early 1842, the height of his career had passed -- it had peaked between 1826 and 1832, and except for periodic

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[21] Strickland's personal connections to the Episcopal Church in Philadelphia were apparently strong, although his sectarian memberships varied throughout his life. He married in Old Christ Church and buried two infant sons there, yet became Swedenborgian in 1813, influenced by a close friend. In 1843, 21 years after designing St. Stephen's Episcopal Church on South 10th Street, he was baptized there with his four daughters. Strickland also completed commissions from at least 11 Episcopal parishes in the region, which suggests that he possessed a substantial church network. In practice, though, he was nonsectarian, designing religious buildings for the Swedenborgians, Moravians, Jews, Unitarians, Presbyterians and Catholics. [Gilchrist, p. 23.]

[22] Trained in the old school of apprentice to master builder (Latrobe), Strickland mastered all of the building and design skills required of that tradition: drawing to scale, surveying, engineering, map-making, engraving, and water-colored and oil-painted renderings. He came of age in a transitional period when architects were gradually moving away from the hands-on tradition of the master builder-architect toward the modern role of off-site, professional designer. This was <u>not</u> the case, however, with St. Peter's, which appears to have been built under his direct supervision. It is known, for example, that Strickland was in Philadelphia for certain periods in 1842, overseeing his additions to the Naval Asylum at Greys Ferry.

commissions from the federal government, found little significant work through the 1840-50s.[23] In the early 1840s he was often shuttling between Philadelphia and Washington, seeking new government projects or overseeing old ones.[24] To compound matters, the nation's economy was stuck in a depression that had begun late in the 1830s.[25] Nonetheless, the nature of the project may have rankled him a bit. After all, Strickland had made his name giving staid Quaker Philadelphia its first white-stone classical architecture and was not particularly fond of its seemingly endless red-brick rowhouses.[26] On the other hand, he was at least familiar with the vocabulary of Georgian architecture, as demonstrated by his faithful recreation of the mid-18th century steeple for the Pennsylvania State House

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[23] Strickland's financial condition is suggested by his letter to St. Peter's vestry accompanying his bill: "I beg leave to present to you my bill for professional services in the construction of the St. Peter's Steeple. I have felt pleasure in reducing my charge against the Church to the one half of the accustomed Architect's fees and have only to regret that circumstances do not allow me the higher satisfaction of dispensing with the charge altogether." [quoted in the vestry minutes, Dec. 13, 1842, from a letter to the vestry dated Nov. 22, 1842.] That appeal can be contrasted with his generosity 20 years earlier, when he donated all of his services to the parish of Immanuel Church in New Castle, Del.

[24] Ibid., p. 12.

[25] Sandra Tatman and Roger W. Moss, Biographical Dictionary of Philadelphia Architects: 1700-1930, (Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., 1985), p. 768.

[26] Strickland once wrote, "nothing can be in worse taste than a red brick house contrasted, as an artist would say, with a clear blue sky....red is the last colour that an Architect would choose in the composition of any of his designs." [Gilchrist, p. 37.]

(Independence Hall) in 1828. This project, along with the design of Christ Church Hospital (1819-29) for that parish as well as extensive interior redesign of St. Paul's Church in 1830, may have assured him of the commission.

While Strickland's model for St. Peter's tower and spire has not been documented, a likely candidate would be the tower and steeple he added in 1820-22 to Immanuel Episcopal Church in New Castle, Del.[27] While the dimensions of the two structures are dissimilar, the essential proportions, materials, and details of the towers are very similar -- especially the similarities between the stages of the towers, their crenelated parapets and their essentially Gothic wooden spires.[28]

The Gothicness of St. Peter's tower raises a question regarding Strickland's historical sense of Anglican architecture -- did he understand the irony of adding a Gothic shape to a classical form?[29] Probably so, otherwise

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[27] Immanuel was originally a small rectangular brick building erected in 1703. Strickland added transepts and a bell tower at the west end. His introduction to the parish probably occurred in 1803-05 when he helped work on the Delaware-Chesapeake Canal as an apprentice to the architect-engineer Benjamin Latrobe. There may have been a Philadelphia connection in 1820 through Immanuel's rector, the Rev. Robert Clay, whose brother, the Rev. Slater Clay, was rector of St. James, Kingsessing, in South Philadelphia.

[28] English early 14th century; see Plate 63 -- St. Giles, Bredon, Worcestershire [Graham Hutton and Edwin Smith, English Parish Churches, (London: Thames and Hudson, 1957), plate 63.]

[29] Pierson calls the bell tower and spire, "the most characteristic and symbolic features of all Gothic churches." He credits Wren with successfully synthesizing classical massing, which is essentially horizontal, with the vertical Gothic spire,

why did he crenelate the top of the tower like a medieval parapet and add a Gothic-looking spire? These questions go beyond the scope of this study. It's likely, though, that the influence of the Anglo-Catholic movement, which found advocates among the vestry, like Horace Binney Jr., and the rector, the Rev. William Odenheimer, may have prompted church officials to select a design that added a certain Gothic flavor while keeping the building's Anglican classicism intact.

The overscale of the tower to the rest of the building is also a mystery. The vestry was offered two designs from the beginning. One version may have been taller than the other, or perhaps, the vestry told Strickland they wanted a prominent structure that would mark St. Peter's on the skyline like Christ Church. Constance Greiff has suggested that the "abandonment" of the classical orders with their strict rules of proportion by the 1840s created an environment in American architecture where Strickland would have felt free to exaggerate his proportions.[30] It is unlikely he would have misunderstood classical proportions of the Georgian period given his identification with the

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"brought into unity with the rest of the church by an imaginative infusion of classical detailing." [Pierson, p. 69.]

[30] Constance M. Greiff, John Notman, Architect: 1810-1865, (Philadelphia, The Athenaeum of Philadelphia, 1979), p. 43.

Greek Revival.[31] He had already demonstrated his talent for sympathetic restoration with his reconstruction of Independence Hall's bell tower 14 years earlier.[32] It seems most likely that the vestry requested a tall tower, and therefore freed Strickland to produce an interpretative design rather than a strict reproduction based on 18th century conventions.

Thomas U. Walter (1804-1887): 1848 Gallery Staircases

Thomas U. Walter's ascent to national prominence occurred just as quickly as William Strickland's. In 1833 he won a nation-wide competition for Girard College's new main building. Walter produced a magnificent white-marble Greek temple under Nicholas Biddle's direction that has been called "the last word in American Greek Revivalism."[33] The success of Founders Hall (1833-47) led to hundreds of commissions that elevated Walter to the top tier of American architects, and, perhaps, first among the Philadelphians in the early to mid-19th century.

Ironically, Strickland had placed second behind his

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[31] Gilchrist, p. 31. Strickland apparently genuinely believed that Greek architecture provided the best historical models. Indeed, his finest buildings were inspired by plates found in Stuart and Revett.

[32] As the first known restoration of an American national landmark, the project actually proved to be a milestone in the history of American historic preservation.

[33] Tatman and Moss, p. 821.

former student in that competition -- no small irony considering that 15 years before a young Strickland had beaten out Benjamin Latrobe, his former mentor, in the 1818 competition for the Second Bank.[34] But Walter suffered bankruptcy in 1841. After moving briefly to Venezuela, his career rebounded with his return to Philadelphia in 1845, and he began to attract work all over the country. His projects encompassed practically every building type including churches,[35] banks, houses, hospitals, hotels, factories, schools, stores, tombs, government offices, a synagogue, and a breakwater.[36]

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[34] The pattern of T.U. Walter's early training coincidentally parallels that of his teacher's. Born in Philadelphia, the son of a bricklayer who had worked for Strickland on the Second Bank, Walter had apprenticed at 15 to Strickland, probably through his father's intercession. Walter remained with Strickland for a year, also studying architectural drawing and rendering at the Franklin Institute's "Drawing School" directed by John Haviland. At some point in the late 1820s, he spent several more years as a draftsmen with Strickland, and apprenticed with his father. After mastering the mason's trade and practicing for several years, he opened his own office about 1830-31. His first major commission was Moyamensing Prison (1831-35), a Gothic stone pile in South Philadelphia, now demolished.

[35] Between 1831 and 1873, Walter designed or renovated at least 65 churches around the region and country, mostly Baptist, Presbyterian and Episcopal. [Tatman and Moss, p. 822-829.]

[36] In 1850, Walter won the competition to enlarge the U.S. Capitol Building in Washington. As Robert Ennis, the leading authority on Walter, has written: "Had Walter executed no other design save the Capitol -- the most symbolically important and controversial building in the United States -- his place as a key figure would be assured." [Tatman and Moss, p. 821] Between 1851 and 1865, after being appointed Architect to the Capitol, Walter designed the wings and dome for the Capitol Building, plus other government offices. He left Washington only after interference from a government commissioner caused him to resign. [Cohen, Drawing Toward Building, p. 76-77.] Walter returned to Philadelphia and

This relatively minor commission to alter St. Peter's gallery staircases came in June of 1848[37] after Walter's return to Philadelphia in 1845 (and rebound from bankruptcy), and before his departure for Washington in 1850. While Strickland might have seemed the logical choice for this job, he had moved to Tennessee by 1848 to work on the state capitol building. Although Walter was well known to Philadelphians, he may have come recommended by the vestry of Christ Church. Over 12 years before, Walter had altered the interior (1834-1836) of that church. Among other unsympathetic changes, he had removed the original box pews and replaced them with benches or "slip" pews favored by the Victorians.

Walter's job at St. Peter's appears to have involved the removal of the original gallery staircases flanking the chancel at the east end. He removed Robert Smith's original boxed winder staircases and may have inserted iron spiral stairs.[38] From most recorded indications, his assignment was only one of numerous renovations and repairs the vestry had been contemplating for over a year; among these was the

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continued to practice until the 1870s. His last major project was assisting John McArthur in the design of Philadelphia City Hall (1871-1901). When Walter died in 1887, he was recognized as one of American architecture's pioneering figures and dean of the profession.

[37] Vestry Minutes, St. Peter's Church, June 13, 1848.

[38] Unfortunately for students of Walter, the iron stairs have not survived and probably were replaced in 1896 by wooden staircases that were themselves replaced in 1960.

installation of gas lighting.[39]

Walter may also have "gothicized" the 18th century interior, which had survived largely intact from Robert Smith's era. The church's records indicated, however, that Walter was paid only $20 for his services, a seemingly small sum for work beyond the scope of staircase alterations.[40] Whoever ordered the change, the interior began to assume darker colors until 1875, perhaps meant to simulate the masonry feeling of a Gothic church. Horace Binney Jr., the distinguished lawyer and vestryman, who served on the vestry's repairs committee before Walter was hired, made the rather draconian recommendation to demolish St. Peter's and replace the building with a new "Gothic" church on the same site.[41] His proposal was rejected, and Binney soon

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[39] The list of renovations included the installation of gas, repainting and recarpeting the interior, alteration of the smaller box pews, raising the bellringers' floor in the tower, and covering the wood-shingle roof with tin. It may seem remarkable that the church was still using 18th century candle chandeliers in 1848, but historically the congregation has been most conservative in making changes to the building. Once gas was installed, for example, they did not replace it with electricity until 1926. On the other hand, the renovations occurred in 1848 as the Gothic Revival, which represented the Oxford Movement of conservative reform, was sweeping through Philadelphia's Episcopal churches and threatening in its High Church zeal to do away with classical buildings like St. Peter's.

[40] Cash Book, March 20, 1849.

[41] [Vestry Minutes, April 13, 1848; see also his anonymous letter in The Banner of the Cross, April 8, 1848, p. 106-107.]. Writing in a newspaper account some five years later, Dr. S. Weir Mitchell, a well-known psychologist, novelist and parishioner, commented that "vigorous efforts were made by some who are pleased with novelty, to remove the old house and erect a fashionable structure in its place, but they were defeated. Fortunately the

resigned from the committee, but the remaining members, like accounting warden Francis Gurney Smith and John Welsh Jr., may have sympathized with his position. In lieu of replacing their bright classical basilica with a dark medieval cruciform, they may have sought compromise and hired Walter, who seemed to hold little sympathy with colonial "antiquities," to darken their space.[42] This is merely

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lovers of the ancient and venerable had influence enough to prevent such a catastrophe. The contest ended in a determination to make such real improvements, as tended to the general comfort of the worshippers, and the use of all means calculated for preservation." [S. Weir Mitchell, "Churches in Philadelphia," v. 4, p. 46. from Thompson Westcott's scrapbook series, collection of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.] Those "pleased with novelty" were generally considered part of the Oxford Movement, a sort of "Anglican `Counter Reformation'" of the 1840s grounded in the conviction that "Protestantism" had slowly been drawing people away from the Church's foundation of "apostolic succession and apostolic tradition," the stuff of faith that had kept the Church of England together during the Reformation. The trouble with "auditory" spaces like St. Peter's, so the Oxford types believed, was they were "secular" spaces and not truly sacred like Gothic "pointed" churches were. As one church historian wrote recently, "They were also perceived as failing to capture the romantic mood of medieval myth that surfaced longingly toward the end of the [18th] century.... The primary objection was theological, for the older design reflected the priority of Word over sacrament.... The `Protestant' style diminished the mysterium tremendum." [Paul F.M. Zahl, "Where Did All the Galleries Go?" Anglican and Episcopal History, v. LX, n. 2, June 1991, p. 179.]

[42] Charles Peterson discovered a revealing quote in Walter's diary that may shed light on his feelings for American colonial architecture: "Visited Christ Church...nearly completed. The architecture is very sad -- always been overrated. I don't like the idea of preserving disreputable antiquities, only because they are old. Greece, Rome and England have all the antiquities to look at that far exceed the genius of the present day; these are well worth preserving." [Charles E. Peterson, "The Building of Christ Church, Philadelphia." Catalogue for the 1981 Antiques Show, (Philadelphia: Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania, 1981), p. 142.] On the other hand, when Walter renovated Christ Church in the 1840s, he remained with light colors rather than trying to darken the interior.

speculation, however; other fragmentary mentions in the vestry minutes and cash books suggest the interior had already been darkened in the 1840s.

Furness & Hewitt: 1876 U.S. Centennial Renovation

About the spring of 1875, when the firm Furness and Hewitt accepted the commission to renovate St. Peter's,[43] the two partners were about to end a four-year partnership, a separation that would occur once their Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts was completed (1871-76).[44]

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[43] The vestry minutes contain no mention of a vote to hire Furness & Hewitt, suggesting that the Repairs Committee was authorized to act on its own; this is a typical example of many other instances in the parish's history where the physical plant was repaired or renovated without a record in the vestry minutes. The commission was noted through a handwritten list of projects made by Furness in one of his sketchbooks that by its notation suggests his responsibility for the project. [George E. Thomas, Jeffrey A. Cohen and Michael J. Lewis, Frank Furness: The Complete Works, (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1991), pp. 80-81.]

Furness & Hewitt likely won the commission through a personal connection to Robert M. Lewis, a vestryman and member of the Repairs Committee; the Lewis family were longtime parishioners and benefactors of the parish. In 1873, Allen Evans, then a draftsman at the firm, became engaged to Rebecca Lewis, daughter of John T. Lewis, a vestryman and well-to-do paint manufacturer. The year before, while Evans was a draftsman for Samuel Sloan, that office had received the commission to design St. Peter's Choir School. It appears that when Evans moved to the Furness office, the church's commissions moved with him; Evans later became a partner of Furness in 1881. In 1874, when a member of the Lewis family donated money to construct a mission chapel for St. Peter's (Memorial Church of the Holy Comforter in South Philadelphia), the firm was again retained. [Ibid., pp. 73, 193 (cat. 63).]

[44] The firm had been formed in 1871 by Frank Furness and George Hewitt after John Fraser (c.1825-1903?), their senior partner, left to become architect of the U.S. Treasury Department. The new firm enjoyed great success almost immediately; perhaps its major commission was the new building for the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (1871-76) at Broad and Cherry Streets. In a short, four-

Frank Furness (1839-1912) was the more charismatic and artistically original of the two. Most Philadelphians would recognize his work today through the Pennsylvania Academy, although students of architecture more frequently cite his banks from the late 1870s as more remarkable creations.[45]

George W. Hewitt (1841-1916) has only recently begun to receive the recognition he deserves as a major regional architect of the late 19th century. While Hewitt may have lacked the design brilliance of Furness, he enjoyed an amazingly prolific career with his later partner and brother, William Hewitt, that may be rivaled in its sheer

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year association, Furness and Hewitt established a reputation that would serve either architect well through respective careers that stretched into the early 20th century. [James F. O'Gorman, George E. Thomas and Hyman Meyers, The Architecture of Frank Furness, (Philadelphia: 1973), pp. 31-42.]

[45] Furness came from a distinguished family of Philadelphia intellectuals. His father, the Rev. William Henry Furness, was pastor of the First Unitarian Church of Philadelphia, and close friend of Ralph Waldo Emerson. His brother, Horace Howard Furness, was a distinguished Shakespearean scholar at the University of Pennsylvania recognized internationally. In 1857, Furness apprenticed to John Fraser, who became his partner a decade later, and is best remembered for his Union League Building (1864-65) at Broad and Sansom Streets. After rudimentary training from Fraser's office, Furness left for Richard Morris Hunt's atelier in New York. Hunt (1827-95) was perhaps America's best known architect in the late 19th century, respected both for his design ability, his expertise, and taste -- he had been the first American trained at France's Ecole des Beaux Arts. Hunt ran his atelier in the Ecole method, training some of the country's brightest new generation of architects. The Civil War interrupted Furness's professional education, although he returned to work and study under Hunt briefly after the war. [George E. Thomas, "Frank Furness: The Flowering of an American Architect," Frank Furness: The Complete Works, pp. 13-51.]

output and variety only by Furness and his later partners.[46]

The timing of St. Peter's renovations was likely inspired by the celebration of the nation's 100th birthday set for the following year.[47] Given the nation's reflections on its colonial past at the time, it is not surprising that the vestry decided to restore something of the church's 18th century appearance. Furness designed the church's first central heating system,[48] but more

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[46] Hewitt was born in Burlington, N.J., to a well-to-do family of Episcopalians who belonged to St. Mary's, a High Church parish that led by the distinguished bishop, George Washington Doane, one of the country's leading Protestant churchmen. Appropriately, the church was an early English Gothic Revival building designed by Richard Upjohn in 1846. Hewitt trained in the office of Scottish-born architect John Notman (1810-1865), the region's best-known designer of the English Gothic favored by Anglo-Catholic or High Church Episcopalians in the 1840-50s. Hewitt probably learned the notion from Notman, as well as from his upbringing, that architecture was an image-making craft meant to express identities like social class, ethnicity and nationality. Notman's clients, and later Hewitt's and Furness's, came largely from the city's "old money" families of British descent. A high proportion of that patronage was Episcopalian or Quaker, an often interchangeable identity in the 19th century upper class in Philadelphia. [Henry F. Withey, Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased), Los Angeles: 1956, p. 361; Philadelphia and Popular Philadelphians, Philadelphia: The North American, 1891, p. 223; Tatman and Moss, pp. 367-368.]

[47] Planning for the Centennial Exposition held in Fairmount Park in Philadelphia began in 1874, says Westcott. More pressing for St. Peter's, however, was the First City Troop's own centennial celebration planned for November 1874 in the church. [Scharf and Westcott, History of Philadelphia, v. 1, p. 839.]

[48] This was either a hot-air or steam-radiator system furnished by the James P. Wood Co., 41 S. Fourth St., with the coal-fired boiler installed in the cellar of the bell tower. Wood stocked both models of "Gold's patented" boiler systems that would supply steam directly to radiators or heat external air. [Philadelphia Evening Bulletin advt., Sept. 3, 1875; Gopsill's City Directory for 1875.]

significantly for a High Victorian architect like himself, Furness removed the dark Gothic-like paint that had characterized the interior since the 1840s, and restored the 18th century whiteness of the woodwork.[49] He did add, however, a touch of Victorian floral stenciling around the gallery windows and walls. And his replacement of the clear-paned glass with delicate floral-etched panes was apparently accepted by the rector and vestry as appropriate.[50]

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[49] Furness came, in large part, out of the English Ruskinian tradition that celebrated hand-made Gothic forms and applied ornamentation. Given the ecclesiastical aesthetic of his age, it would have been understandable had he promoted a renovation in the High Victorian Gothic style. After all, the 1870s marked the height of the High Victorian's popularity in Philadelphia's largely Episcopal upper-class society. This was especially true for Episcopal Church architecture given that segments of the Church had swung back to "High Church" liturgy, which considered English Gothic the proper ecclesiastical style. But Furness presumably understood the architectural symbolism that this plain redbrick building held for "old family" Philadelphians and chose instead to restore a sense of its 18th century brightness. Ascertaining credit for design work often proves difficult within historical firms with multiple designers, but recent research by Dr. George E. Thomas involving one of Furness's surviving sketch books strongly suggests his responsibility for St. Peter's. [Thomas, The Complete Works, p. 79-81.]

[50] [See ca. 1887 view in Appendix, p. ___.] A brief notice appeared Sept. 10, 1875 in both the Philadelphia Inquirer [p. 3] and The Evening Bulletin [p. 2] noting: "The interior of the church has been entirely repainted and ceiling frescoed...[following] extensive repairs and improvements." This brief, which did not mention the design firm by name, noted that "all of the windows were filled with colored glass of a neat pattern, the pulpit illuminated and the stoves formerly used for heating have been replaced by furnaces in the cellar...." The change in color scheme was only alluded to: "Although this venerable edifice has not been altered in its general arrangements, it had been made much more bright and cheerful by the renovations...." Curiously, both

George B. Roberts (1900-1975): 1960 Alterations

The most extensive alterations to the church interior were completed late in this century, ironically, by an architect who probably considered himself a specialist in 18th century Philadelphia architecture.[51] It is no small

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newspaper accounts were exactly worded, suggesting that either the church or the architect had supplied a press release.

[51] In many ways, George Brooke Roberts (1900-1975) may have seemed to the vestry like the ideal architect for the project. A former vestryman (1933-195?), accounting warden and chairman of the building committee who was now retired from the parish, Roberts was a very competent architect who appears to have practiced alone out of his townhouse at 1820 Delancey Place. The grandson and namesake of George B. Roberts, the fifth president of the Pennsylvania Railroad (1880-1897), Roberts was a scion of one of the city's leading Old Philadelphia families. Independently wealthy and described as "aristocratic," Roberts was born and raised at "Pencoyd," the family's ancestral home built in the 1680s by John Roberts, a Welsh Quaker, who settled the Welsh Tract in Montgomery County. Roberts attended St. George's School in Newport, R.I., graduated from Harvard College (1922), and later trained at Penn's School of Architecture (1928) under Paul Cret. After Penn, he worked for Cret until starting his own practice in 1936. [George Roberts, "Time Remembered: A Philadelphia Childhood," Roberts Papers - HSP; The Evening Bulletin, Jan. 4, 1975] Like many of his generation, he disdained certain Victorian architecture, including his own birthplace that had been substantially altered and enlarged in 1883 by Allen Evans, then a partner of Frank Furness. [Thomas, The Complete Works, p. 248.] Nonetheless, his home at Delancey Place was decorated with mid-to-late 19th century Victorian furnishings. Much of Roberts's private work appears related to personal contacts with other Old Philadelphia families within his social circle, such as his restoration of 217 Spruce Street in 1960 for Mrs. C. Jared Ingersoll. Because of his wealth, he appears to have taken only those projects that attracted him. In 1959, he and his wife, the former Mary Hoppin Howland, published Triumph on Fairmount, a biography of their friend Fiske Kimball, the former director of the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Roberts had carefully attempted to learn the building history of St. Peter's, even writing a six-page pamphlet, entitled "The Building of St. Peter's Church," probably prepared for the parish in 1959-60 as something of a research-based rationale for the changes to come. Roberts was also responsible for designing the marble plaque (1942) with the church's name inserted into the gate's west-end brick pier, the wooden sign board (1950) just inside the Pine Street gate, and the

testimony to this parish's stewardship for over 230 years that George Roberts's changes could be considered very significant. Sadly, in far too many American colonial churches that survived into the late 20th century, such changes by comparison could have been considered minor. Nonetheless, since the interior fabric of St. Peter's had remained relatively untouched over three centuries, the 1960 alterations by Roberts are significant and proved highly controversial at the time to at least one important parishioner.[52]

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mahogany prayer kneeler and litany desk (1950) built by the designer Gustav Ketterer as a memorial to the Rev. Edward M. Jefferys. St. Peter's commission presumably led to other commissions, such as rehabilitations of the Hill-Physick-Keith House, 321 S. 4th St. (1965-70) and "Grumblethorpe" on Germantown Avenue (1966-69) for the Society for the Preservation of Philadelphia Landmarks [Roberts Papers - HSP]. Sometime in the late 1950s, Roberts retired and left the parish for St. Asaph's, Bala Cynwyd, the church whose construction his grandfather had financed in 1888 near the old family estate (demolished) on City Line Avenue.

[52] The leading opponent was Lawrence M.C. Smith (1898-1970), an attorney, conservationist, and founder and owner of WFLN-FM. Like Roberts, who was a contemporary, Smith was a scion of another Old Philadelphia family. Public spirited in the noblesse oblige tradition of many aristocratic Philadelphia families -- with whom St. Peter's had long been associated as a leading parish church -- Smith had spent most of his career since the 1930s in various governmental posts connected to foreign service. [The Evening Bulletin, Aug. 12, 1975] A member of the vestry's building committee at the time, Smith was so disturbed by the committee's (and the vestry's) changes that he and his wife, the former Eleanor Houston of Chestnut Hill, eventually left St. Peter's. Having apparently learned while on vacation of the vestry's resolve to go ahead with the alterations, he wrote in early July 1960 to Norman Kunz, the rector's warden: "One must assume that with our architect [Roberts] the work will be done in good taste. But this will be a major change in the character of the church, destroying its open feeling and taking away possibly 15 percent of the downstairs open space, for what are useful but secondary reasons." He also

The outward alterations consisted of enclosing the east and west ends of the first floor beneath the galleries, removing those first-floor pews against the east and west walls, adding new staircases at the west end and reconstructing those at the east end, restoring the entrance doors to their original 18th century height, and returning the first-floor tower room to a meeting space for the vestry. The project also involved replacing most of the mechanical systems including the wiring, plumbing and heating systems, and the installation of a fire detection

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criticized the proposed addition of a second pair of gallery stairs at the west end, noting that the galleries were rarely used and that no engineering survey had been made of their strength. "It would be much better," he wrote, "to limit each balcony to less than 80 people [to meet fire code] than to destroy the basic character and charm of the 200-year-old church." Smith argued for a comprehensive study (sounding remarkably similar to what preservationists today call a Historic Structure Report) to assess all aspects of the building's condition and needs first before any changes were made: "Having fixed over some 15 houses in Washington, Philadelphia and Maine," he wrote, "I would be dishonest to be a party to restoration work which ignores all the lessons which I have learned through bitter experience. What is required is a thorough and complete preparation of the needs first, in detail and in writing, then the plans, and the complete approval of the details by a responsible group other than the architect. In restoration work which affects a 200-year-old building, delegation to an architect or an engineer, no matter how competent, without the most detailed knowledge by the group of what the effect is on the appearance, seems to me quite wrong." Ironically, the rector, the Rev. Joseph Koci, Jr., was then staying at Smith's vacation home in Freeport, Maine, but Smith apparently did not discuss his objections with Koci "because I do not feel that he should be involved." [Photocopy of letter from Lawrence M.C. Smith, dated July 12, 1960, to C. Norman Kunz. Collection of the Rev. F. Lee Richards]

system.[53]

The building had always lacked a sacristy[54] and space for the altar guild and other lesser service uses. Also, the existing stairs to the gallery at the east end had long failed to meet the city fire code.[55] Advocates of the alterations on the vestry, like Norman Kunz, William Talbot, Joseph Fraser and Frank Seymour, considered the changes necessary to meet safety requirements as well as increase the serviceability of the building.

As early as 1949, the vestry building committee, then chaired by Roberts, had studied those issues,[56] but not until May 1959, with the parish's bicentennial two years

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[53] Memo dated June 11, 1960, entitled: "The Special Committee Charged with the Restoration and Alterations of Saint Peter's Church." [Collection of the Rev. F. Lee Richards]

[54] The room in a church, traditionally near the chancel, for clergy vestments and altar vessels. This room also provided a dressing space for the rector and any attending clergy prior to a service.

[55] While there is no documentary evidence until 1960, the old gallery stairs apparently had failed to meet the fire code for emergency egress for some time. The Philadelphia fire marshall had likely overlooked this ongoing violation due to the age of the building and the infrequency of the galleries' use. However, in 1960, the fire marshall condemned the old stairs after being called in to approve Roberts's proposed changes. [Roberts Collection - HSP] The special vestry committee to oversee the project also noted that the fire marshall had threatened to close down the galleries unless adequate staircases were installed at all four corners of the church.

[56] In May 1949, Roberts wrote to William R. Talbot, a vestryman and chairman of the building committee, indicating his willingness to make the alterations that he would eventually complete in 1960. [Roberts Collection - HSP]

away, did planning and design actually begin.[57] Judging by one pair of schematic drawings, dated May 30, 1960, Roberts offered the committee at least one other solution.[58] Whether this other design was prompted by Lawrence Smith's objections to the winning plan is unknown and a source for future study. In any case, the vestry unanimously approved Roberts's winning plan on April 19, 1960, the city issued a building permit on July 1, and work by J.S. Cornell & Sons, 1528 Cherry St., began immediately thereafter; by November, the project was largely completed.

In June, Roberts sent his drawings to the Philadelphia Historical Commission for their approval, largely as a courtesy to its chairman, the architect Grant Simon. Although St. Peter's was already certified as a historic building, the Historical Commission could not (and did not) claim any jurisdiction over the interior space of its

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[57] That June the rector appointed a special committee to oversee the project, which consisted of himself; J. Howard Berry as chairman; Norman C. Kunz, the rector's warden; and Frank E. Seymour, the accounting warden. William R. Talbot was still chair of the vestry's building committee. [St. Peter's parish records] Why a special committee had to be formed to handle the project and not the building committee is unknown.

[58] [See Appendix, p. 221.] This alternative plan avoided the enclosure of the west wall by enlarging the tower vestibules and attaching them to the west wall of the church. The new hipped-roof structures would have housed the altar guild and clergy vesting rooms. The alcove spaces would have been filled with new staircases to the gallery, but the west-end pews would have been saved. The trade-off, however, involved exterior alterations -- the ground-floor west windows would have been removed as well as the second-floor windows in the west wall and the north and south walls of the tower; in their place Roberts proposed inserting bull's-eye windows like that in the east-side pediment.

certified buildings. The commission reviewed and approved the drawings, largely to expedite their approval by the city's Department of Licenses and Inspections.[59] Lawrence Smith by that time had not even begun his protest to the vestry since he appears to have been on vacation in Maine. After discovering that the vestry would not hear him, he turned in late July to the Historical Commission, but it was too late[60] -- by this time, work was well underway.[61]

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[59] Photocopy of letter dated June 30, 1960, from Grant Simon, FAIA, chairman of the Philadelphia Historical Commission, to George B. Roberts. [Collection of the Rev. F. Lee Richards]

[60] In retrospect, his letter of protest to the commission's chairman sounded much like a contemporary preservationist's approach in the way it appealed to the larger public interest: "We are convinced that a more thorough consideration, taking into account the fact that St. Peter's belongs not to the Vestry, or to the congregation..., but to the whole City of Philadelphia, will evolve [sic] some solution that does not violate in such a major way the historical and architectural integrity of this two-hundred-year old historic monument. It is better that no action be taken until alternate solutions have been explored fully. One was proposed that is better than this, and there are a number of other ways of meeting the problem without doing this tremendous amount of damage for secondary reasons." [Photocopy of letter, dated July 26, from Lawrence M.C. Smith to Grant Simon; Collection of the Rev. F. Lee Richards]

[61] The special committee to oversee the project directed a memo to the vestry, presumably in the spring of 1960, in which it explained its actions: "Your committee hurried to state, relative to every detail in the above suggestions, that throughout all of their deliberations they have considered the exquisite beauty of our building, as it now stands. No alterations or additions can be tolerated which would do violence to that lovely and relatively simple charm, which presently exists. We believe that the restoration will contribute, and enhance, if possible, the present beauty of design of the interior and tremendously increase the efficiency, comfort and safety." [Undated typescript paper entitled "Restorations and Improvements at St. Peter's Church." Collection of the Rev. F. Lee Richards]

1753

March 21: The Christ Church vestry decided with some urging from those parishioners who lived in Society Hill to build a new church -- in the rector's words, a "chapel of ease" -- in the south end of the city to accommodate the overflow congregation.
(Letter from the Rev. Robert Jenney to new church (subscribers: CC Archives)

1757

From this year forward, the rector, the Rev. Dr. Robert Jenney, 68, grew progressively more debilitated from the "paralytick and asthmatic disorder, which rendered him incapable of performing any ministerial duty."
(Feb. 7, 1759 letter from Christ Church Vestry to the (Bishop of London)

1758

Aug. 5: Master builder Robert Smith of Philadelphia and the Vestry of Christ Church signed the construction contract for St. Peter's Church [see the Appendix, p. 205, for a transcribed version].
(CC Archives)

1759

June 19: The Rev. William McClenaghan was elected an assistant minister to the Rev. Jenney. The Bishop of London, however, refused to license McClenaghan, embarrassing Jenney.
(CC Vestry minutes)

1761

Aug. 13: Christ Church Building Committee reported that the new building was ready for use. Vestry voted to name the church St. Peter's.
(CC Vestry minutes)

Aug. 19: Vestry committee (Jacob Duché Sr., John Kearsley, and Evan Morgan) reported plan to regulate new church; proposed that Peter's should be co-equal with Christ Church and together called the "United Congregations of Christ Church and St. Peter's in the City of Philadelphia." [The churches remained united until 1832.]
(CC Vestry minutes)

Sept 4: Opening Dedication Service. The Rev. Dr. William Smith, first provost of the College of Pennsylvania, officiated since the rector, Rev. Dr. Robert Jenney, was infirm and his assistant, the Rev. Dr. Richard Peters, apparently had prior engagements.
(Pa. Gazette, Sept. 10, 1761)

1762

The Rev. Dr. Jenney died and was succeeded by his assistant the Rev. Dr. Richard Peters who served until 1775.

1764

April: "It was at the same time recommended to the Committee formerly appointed to take in subscriptions for St. Peter's Church that they use their best endeavors to collect the monies which yet remain unpaid on said subscriptions."
(CC Vestry minutes)

June: The rector, the Rev. Richard Peters, departed for England due to poor health, leaving the Rev. Jacob Duché to oversee the parish.
(Vestry minutes)

1765

Jan 7: Vestry decided to approach the "Humble House of the Free Men of Pennsylvania for Liberty to organize a lottery to raise £1,500 needed to finish paying for the church. They hoped to combine their need with two Anglican parishes in England (York and Reading) that both needed to raise 300 pounds for new buildings.[1] (Dorr's history)

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[1] In his 1841 history of Christ Church, Dorr took occasional editorial liberties with the text of the vestry minutes: he changed the "Humble House" above to the "Honourable House." The vestry's resolution excerpted below confirms the overcrowding problem that prompted construction of the new church: "many serious and well disposed persons in the communion and persuasion of [Christ] Church were without the opportunity of attending regularly...and on account of the great distance it lay from many of them, which made their attendance inconvient in the extremeties of heat and cold....That it being considered that public buildings may be rendered among the chief ornaments of every city, and that the said proposed church would be of lasting use to the public, it was determined to erect it in a commodious manner, with as much elegance as might be consistent with plainness and simplicity ....That a neat and convenient church, called St. Peter's, had been accordingly built....But by the sudden rise of the price of materials and labour, your petitioners...find that they still are

June 28: Charter of Incorporation approved for United Churches.
(CC vestry minutes)

1766

February: Jacob Duché Sr., Alexander Stedman, Joseph Sims, and William Bingham remained the surviving members of the board legally obligated to finance the building of the church through subscriptions. Before the incorporation, the parish itself could not assume financial obligations.

Dec. 2: Parish remained £900 in debt for building St. Peter's.
(CC vestry minutes)

1768

May 9: Vestry paid for a notice, perhaps a handbill or newspaper notice, toward apprehending the people who broke into the church. A week later, they paid for mending St. Peter's windows.
(CC Accounting Warden)

1772

January: Dr. John Kearsley died in his 88th year; a vestryman for 53 years.

Nov. 30: The Rev. William White and the Rev. Thomas Coombe were hired as assistant ministers to the rector, the Rev. Richard Peters, and the senior assistant, the Rev. Jacob Duché.
(CC vestry minutes)

1775

Sept 22: Due to illness, the Rev. Richard Peters resigned after 13 years as rector. The Rev. Jacob Duché, his senior assistant, was elected to succeed him.
(Vestry minutes)

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under a heavy debt of near £1,500 for finishing the said church, for enclosing the burying ground, and purchasing an addition to it...." [The Rev. Benjamin Dorr, D.D., An Historical Account of Christ Church, Philadelphia, from its Foundation, A.D. 1695 to A.D. 1841; and of St. Peter's and St. James's until the Separation of the Churches, (New York: Swords Stanford & Co., 1841).]

1777

December: With the British Army occupying Philadelphia, the Rev. Duché left for England, having announced his intention at the vestry meeting Dec. 9, 1777. Formerly a supporter of the Revolution, Duché had shifted and become a Loyalist; Duché remained rector in title and never officially resigned.

July: The Rev. Thomas Coombe, the assistant minister, unable to support the Revolution, resigned as well and departed for England, leaving William White the city's sole Anglican clergyman.

1779

April 15: The Rev. William White elected fourth rector and served until his death in 1836 (57 years).

1785

Aug. 5: Announced at parish meeting of the United Churches that "necessary repairs" to St. Peter's exclusive of the new churchyard wall would cost £286,16s. [It remains unknown what those repairs were.]
(Subscription bill -- CC Archives)

1787

Feb. 4: Having sailed to England, William White was consecrated Bishop of the Diocese of Pennsylvania by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

1789

August and October: The first General Convention met at Christ Church to form the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States.

1799

Dec. 28: Paid "for black cloth to put in the churches in mourning on account of the death of Gen. Washington" (who died Dec. 18).
(CC accounting warden)

1807

Feb. 16: Vestry received a letter from the distinguished architect Benjamin Latrobe "offering his professional services in building a church [St. James] in lieu of his

subscription which was referred to the building committee."[2]
(CC vestry minutes)

1812

Prompted perhaps by the War of 1812, the currency system shifted from the British pound to American dollars.

1819

Panic of 1819 and the subsequent depression had prolonged affect on the finances of the United Churches.
(Peter J. Parker, Guide to Archives of Christ Church)

1821

The General Convention held at St. Peter's.
(Evans timeline)[3]

1823

General Convention held again at St. Peter's
(Evans timeline)

1826

General Convention met a third time at St. Peter's
(Evans timeline)

Oct. 30: First vote taken by the three congregations of the United Churches over whether to separate failed to carry.
(CC vestry minutes)

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[2] Built 1807-10, this third church, which became part of the United Churches in 1810, was located on North Seventh Street just above Market. In 1829, the parish separated from the United Churches but remained on Seventh Street. In 1870, following the growth of fashionable Philadelphia society, it moved to the northwest corner of 22nd and Walnut Streets where a new church was designed by the architect Emlen Littell. [Vestry minutes; Scharf and Westcott, v. 2, p. 1350]

[3] The Rev. Allen Evans's timeline was drawn up for St. Peter's Historical Society about 1950. Evans was rector from 1947-1953.

1832

Jan. 13: St. Peter's and Christ Church separated.[4]
(Charter approved by the Governor)

October: The Rev. Dr. William H. DeLancey, then Provost of the University of Pennsylvania (1828-1833) accepted the position of assistant rector, replacing the Rev. William Chaderton, with the agreement that he would succeed Bishop White, the rector of St. Peter's, upon his death.
(Vestry minutes)

1833

May 15: The Rev. Dr. DeLancey, then Provost of Penn, elected senior assistant minister.
(Vestry minutes)

1835

General Convention held again at St. Peter's
(Evans timeline)

March 10: The Rev. DeLancey requested leave of absence due to poor health -- under orders from his doctor "to try the effects of a sea voyage." Sailed for Europe in April.
(Vestry minutes)

Oct. 13: In a letter from London to the vestry written August 27, DeLancey said he is feeling better, having just returned from a 1,700 mile trip. He requested leave extension until May 1, 1836, since his English doctor had advised against returning to Philadelphia until the spring. [He's apparently got something wrong with his throat that has prevented him from preaching.]
(Vestry minutes)

1836

General Convention held again at St. Peter's
(Evans timeline)

1836

July 17: Bishop William White -- rector of St. Peter's for 57 years -- died shortly before noon at age 89. His

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[4] The motive behind the separation was to improve the finances of both congregations, the same motive that prompted St. James to split from the United Churches in 1829. [Peter J. Parker, "Historical Sketch," The Archives of Old Christ Church, (Philadelphia: 1981), p. 16.]

assistant, the Rev. Dr. William H. Delancey, succeeded him.
(Vestry minutes)

Sept 27: Vestry approved funds to hire an assistant to DeLancey while he is still recovering from illness.[5]
(Vestry minutes)

1838

Nov. 16: The Rev. William DeLancey announced his election as Bishop of Western New York -- will resign as rector.
(Vestry minutes)

1839

Jan 11: The Rev. William Odenheimer elected to assist rector until May.

May 9: The Rev. DeLancey consecrated as Bishop of Western N.Y. St. Peter's is temporarily without a rector, although Odenheimer was assisting and will be named that year.
(Perry's History of the Episcopal Church, Vol. 1)

Oct. 5: A fire this evening in the store of the Accounting Warden, Francis Gurney Smith, nearly destroyed the church records; the store is located on 37 S. Front St. [old numbering system]
(Vestry minutes from Dec. 10)

Oct: Architect John Haviland paid $10 for designing monument for Bishop White.
(Cash book)

1840

April 28: The Rev. William H. Odenheimer elected as rector, succeeding Bishop DeLancey.
(Vestry minutes)

1841

July: The Rev. Dr. James Abercrombie, assistant minister for over 40 years, died at the age of 84.

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[5] Following the death of Bishop White, the power of the vestry may have increased. As a body, they may have been more predisposed toward High Church ceremony than White, who was decidedly Low Church. DeLancey's illness may have contributed to the vestry's growing influence. Possibly, DeLancey's dissatisfaction with the vestry may have contributed to his acceptance of the bishopship of the Diocese of Western New York in 1838.

Dec. 29: Joseph R. Ingersoll, the rector's warden, called special meeting of the vestry to announce that Benjamin Chew Wilcocks, a former vestryman from William White's rectorship, had announced on Christmas Day his intention to buy a set of six chimes for the church. [Wilcocks was the father-in-law of Ingersoll's brother.][6]
(Vestry minutes)

1842

Jan. 20: Vestry was studying two plans and estimates for a bell tower presented by architect William Strickland, but no decision made yet.
(Vestry minutes)

Feb. 10: Vestry voted to use Strickland's second design for a bell tower "provided [it] doesn't exceed $4,000."
(Vestry minutes)

April 1: Old vestry house attached to the west side of church was demolished. [Construction work for the bell tower followed and was completed by the end of the year.]
(Vestry minutes)

1843

April 25: The rector, the Rev. Odenheimer, suggested (and has confirmed by the vestry) the beginning of daily public services. Odenheimer, who was a proponent of the Tractarian Movement, called it an "ancient and pious usage which he believed was now generally dispensed with" by most Episcopal congregations in the United States. [The previous rector, William DeLancey, may not have shared his philosophy.]
(Vestry minutes)

1859

June 24: The Rev. Odenheimer announced his resignation after election as Bishop of New Jersey.
(Vestry minutes)

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[6] Wilcocks' gift did not appear out of the blue, but was a response to the vestry's discussions starting in June about replacing the bell(s) in the cupola. In a Sept. 14 meeting, they discussed three options: a set of chimes from Thomas Mears of London; a single bell from George Haley & Son; or a single bell from Louis Debose. By Sept. 28, the bells committee seemed to be leaning toward the chimes, which they believed could fit into the cupola, yet the vestry probably tabled the idea at the time.

1860

March 28: The Rev. George Leeds, formerly of St. Peter's, Salem, Ma., was elected rector [to serve from 1860 to 1867].
(Vestry minutes)

1861

Sept. 4: Service and events held celebrating the parish's Centennial.

1865

June 19: The first Christ Church Hospital building on Cherry St. sold for $22,000; had been built by architect William Strickland.
(Vestry minutes)

1867

March 27: The rector, the Rev. George Leeds, resigned and left for Grace Church, Baltimore.
(Vestry minutes)

1868

Feb. 27: The Rev. Thomas F. Davies from Portsmouth, N.H., elected as succeeding rector [serves from 1868-89].
(Vestry minutes)

1874

June 9: The Memorial Church of the Holy Comforter founded as a parish chapel on property owned by the Lewis family, longtime parishioners. Located at 19th and Titan Streets in a South Philadelphia working-class neighborhood, the chapel was designed by Fraser, Furness & Hewitt and paid for by Miss Margaretta S. Lewis as a memorial to her mother. The complex also included a parish house and Sunday school building enlarged in the early 1880s by Ms. Lewis.
(Vestry minutes; Scharf and Westcott, v. 2)

1872

April 3: St. Peter's Endowment Fund established by the vestry under the leadership of former vestryman Horace Binney Jr., now 93 years old, who contributed $1,000 as seed money.
(Vestry minutes)

1873

Jan. 21: J. [Joshua] Francis Fisher died, leaving $3,000 for the Endowment Fund [vestryman from 1861 to 1873].

1885

Dec. 8: St. Paul's Church, South Third St., made overture, seeking possible merger with St. Peter's. [Although nothing is mentioned until 1889, the matter was seriously considered.]
(Vestry minutes)

1889

June 27: The rector of 21 years, the Rev. Dr. Thomas F. Davies, notified vestry of his having accepted the bishopship of Michigan; [apparently his tenure was strong and smooth].
(Vestry minutes)

December: St. Peter's began leasing St. Paul's Church on South Third St. as a mission until 1893.
(The Rev. Joseph Koci letter - Roberts' Papers)

1890

Feb 19: The Rev. Dr. William H. Vibbert from Chicago elected rector to replace Davies; first vestry meeting of the year not held until May.
(Vestry minutes)

1891

May 26: The new rector, the Rev. William Vibbert, resigned effective Aug. 1 after little more than a year to become minister of the chapel of Trinity Church, New York City.[7] In the early summer of 1891, the Rev. Edward Jefferys of Detroit remained on the short list of clergymen being considered for rector.

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[7] Apparently, St. Peter's didn't quite measure up to Mr. Vibbert's estimation of his station in life. As he characterized the move in his letter to the vestry, the New York post offered him a "position of great responsibility and influence." The Rev. Jefferys recalled in the 1927 parish yearbook that Vibbert had complained "owing to the changes in the neighborhood and the apparently diminishing membership, St. Peter's had, in its present location, outlived its usefulness." (1927 Parish Yearbook)

Sept. 25: The Rev. J. Lewis Parks from Middletown, Ct., elected rector to succeed Vibbert.
(Vestry minutes)

1892

The Rev. Charles P. B. Jefferys Jr., elected curate (1892-1899); later became minister in charge from 1896 to 1897. Jefferys, who later taught at St. George's School and wrote the Provincial History of St. Peter's and the George Washington monograph, may have been the older brother or uncle of the Rev. Edward M. Jefferys, who became rector in 1905.

1896

May 2: The rector, the Rev. J. Lewis Parks, resigned after not quite five years to go to Calvary Church in New York City.
(Vestry minutes)

1897

Jan. 4: The Rev. Richard H. Nelson from Norwich, Ct., elected rector (1897-1904) to replace the Rev. Parks.
(Vestry minutes)

1899

Dec. 12: The Rev. C.P.B. Jefferys Jr. retired as an assistant on account of continued ill health. [Jefferys will die in 1900.]
(Vestry minutes)

1901

Jan. 7: Vestry was considering the proposed conveyance of St. Paul's Church to the parish. The following month, they decided to proceed with transfer prior to the dissolution of the corporation; by April, the court approved the transfer -- St. Peter's owned St. Paul's from April 1901 to Dec. 8, 1903.

1903

Dec. 8: Vestry agreed to sell the St. Paul's church building to the Diocese of Pennsylvania for the Protestant Episcopal City Mission.
(Vestry minutes)

1904

March 8: The rector (1897-1904), the Rev. Dr. Richard Henry Nelson, has been elected Bishop Coadjutor of Albany and will resign May 5.
(Vestry minutes)

May 23: The Rev. Thomas F. Davies of All Saints, Worcester, Ma., was elected to replace Nelson but declined.
(Vestry minutes)

1905

March 14: Vestry was having trouble securing a new rector. The Rev. Edward Jefferys "and all the clergy of the church in the United States are nominated for the office."
(Vestry minutes)

Dec. 22: The Rev. Dr. Edward Miller Jefferys (1865-1946) of Cumberland, Md., was elected rector to replace Nelson. [He was probably the younger brother or nephew of the Rev. Charles P.B. Jefferys Jr. (1862-1900), whose plaque is on northeast wall of church.]
(Vestry minutes)

1906

March 1: The Rev. Edward Jefferys assumed 12th rectorship of St. Peter's, serving for 31 years until the summer of 1937; he came to St. Peter's after being rector of other parishes and serving as curate of the Berkeley Divinity School.
(Vestry minutes)

Nov. 11: Historical Society of Pennsylvania was granted permission to make copies of church records -- one set of which was to be property of the church. [Unknown whether that set exists or whether parish ever received it.]
(Vestry minutes)

1917

April 11: The rector, Dr. Jefferys, requested leave of absence to become an army chaplain during the First World War.
(Vestry minutes)

1929

April 3: To remove Allied flags from the church; probably hung there since the First World War.
(Vestry minutes)

1938

January: The Rev. Frederick W. Blatz became 13th rector (1938-47); he began as assistant to the Rev. Edward M. Jefferys a year before while not quite ordained.
(Vestry minutes)

1947

Sept. 23: The Rev. Allen Evans accepted position as 14th rector following the Rev. Blatz's decision in March 1946 to accept call from St. Paul's Church, Westfield, N.J. Evans had been appointed rector-in-charge in September 1946 pending a search. [Evans was the grandson and namesake of the architect Allen Evans, a partner of Frank Furness from 1881 to c. 1895.]

1950

Since November 1949, the parish had received $23,500 from an "anonymous donor" -- [Mrs. Charles Fearon, 6720 Emlen St.] -- to rehabilitate the church following the plans of George B. Roberts, a longtime vestryman and architect.

Jan. 4: St. Peter's Historical Society founded. [Apparently, some of the research within the society's notecard collection maintained in the parish office was undertaken by the Rev. Frederick Blatz who resigned in 1946.]

Feb. 28: Clifford Lewis, the accounting warden, to return "the great mass of Church records long stored in his office...." [in preparation for his resignation from the vestry]
(Vestry minutes)

1951

Feb. 27: Vestry appointed committee to consult with Bishop Hart concerning the possibility of re-merging with Christ Church.[8]
(Vestry minutes)

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[8] This year, bad blood came to the surface that had been developing between the rector, Allen Evans, and many members of the vestry. See Bishop Hart's letters entered in the April 24 minutes, which seem to be critical of Evans. One of the issues concerned $1,000 in some compensatory allowance to the rector that most of the vestry wanted rescinded.

1952

September: The Rev. Evans, who was apparently a British citizen, was away on some extended vacation due to illness [but returned by January 1953].
(Vestry minutes)

1953

Dec. 13: Vestry accepted letter of resignation from the rector, Dr. Allen Evans, due to a serious and prolonged illness; [apparently, he was bedridden].
(Vestry minutes)

1954

The Rev. Francis Rhein elected 16th rector of St. Peter's.

1955

Jan. 5: Entry regarding the murder of the curate, Dr. Benjamin H. Bissell, in his apartment. Parish counsel, Edward S. Morris, "gave a short and final report on the tragedy which has befallen our late curate."
(Vestry minutes)

1957

Feb. 8: First mention of parish becoming involved in the city's redevelopment plans for Society Hill. Ray Ballinger made liaison with the city agency (his contact is Donald Jenks) concerning the church's role. Lawrence M.C. Smith donated $250 for Ballinger "to prepare a survey of the plan of St. Peter's in the reconstruction."
(Vestry minutes)

Feb. 26:
- A vestry committee will continue to study the redevelopment plans through summer. The vestry hoped to acquire the remaining properties within the block: those included five houses on Lombard and four houses on 4th Street.
- By October, vestry formally requested properties, adding their desire for a lot east of Third Street for St. Peter's Choir School playground.
(Vestry minutes)

April 10: The rector, the Rev. Francis Rhein, quit angrily in the middle of a vestry meeting. [The dispute centered on his belief that the rector should control the choir school

and determine the future role of the headmaster [choirmaster Dr. Harold Gilbert].
(Vestry minutes)

1958

Sept. 28: After a tough search involving three candidates who had turned them down, the vestry elected the Rev. Joseph Koci, Jr. of St. Anne's Church, Middletown, Del.

1968

June 25: The Rev. Joseph Koci, Jr. resigned as rector, having locked horns for a final time with the vestry over the rector's control of the choir school.
(Vestry minutes)

1970

Jan. 27: The new rector, the Rev. F. Lee Richards [father of the author], was expected to arrive on Feb. 3 and take up temporary residence with the Rev. Ernest Harding, rector of Christ Church, until the Richards' new home was completed at 4 Blackwell Place. [This is a courtyard off the alley called Stamper Street between Second and Third Streets.]
(Vestry minutes)

Feb. 24: The Rev. F. Lee Richards, 17th rector of St. Peter's Church, presided over his first vestry meeting.
(Vestry minutes)

1981

March: The Richards moved to Chestnut Hill from 4 Blackwell Place; the house is sold by April 1982 and the mortgage held by the church paid off.

1984

Oct. 24: The Rev. Richards announced to the vestry that he will retire on Feb. 1, 1985, the 15th anniversary of his arrival at St. Peter's. The minutes entry reads: "He came to a church lacking clear direction and divided over the separation of the school. He will leave from the parish a church with diversity of membership, but unity of purpose in evangelism and outreach."
(Vestry minutes)

1985

Feb. 1: The Rev. Richards retired from St. Peter's on the anniversary of his 15th year as rector of the parish.

Aug. 5: The Rev. Ralph W. Pitman, Jr. elected 18th rector of St. Peter's Church.
(Vestry minutes)

Dec. 18: Vestry re-established the office of Parish Clerke; Alan Heavens elected for one-year term as Clerke.
(Vestry minutes)

1986

Sept. 17: As something of a footnote to the junkbond-fed market of the Reagan era, Vestryman Donald Roberts reported that Paul Kuper, a securities broker [probably with Brown Brothers], made $5,000 for St. Peter's in just one day of stock market trading.
(Vestry minutes)

1987

Oct. 7: Special meeting held with the Rt. Rev. Alan Bartlett, Bishop of Pennsylvania, present; the vestry accepted the Rev. Pitman's letter of resignation. [He moved that winter and took a job in February with the Collegiate School in Richmond, Va.]
(Vestry minutes)

1989

May 24: The Rev. Wendell W. Meyer elected 19th rector of St. Peter's Church. The vestry has decided to sell rectory at 430 S. Fifth St., which they purchased in 1985. By August, the Meyers had purchased their own home at 733 South 2nd Street in Queen Village.
(Vestry minutes)

CARPETING

In the 18th century, the church probably didn't contain carpeted aisles, although individual pewholders presumably were free to decorate their boxes as they saw fit, as long as it agreed with the corporate taste of the congregation. The gallery aisles and stairs were carpeted as early as 1835, presumably to muffle the sound of footsteps. At the time, the church probably contained only one set of stairs [at the east end]. The central aisle was carpeted in 1840, and presumably the side aisles were carpeted soon after, although the vestry minutes don't specify when. The pews were carpeted in September 1846, although it is difficult to believe that individual pewholders hadn't carpeted their boxes earlier. The ground-floor aisle carpets were removed in 1871, most likely due to age, and not replaced until 1875 when the renovations in anticipation of the 1876 Centennial Exposition were completed by Frank Furness; this project probably included re-carpeting the pews. At some point in the late 19th century, the central aisle carpet was removed; a photograph [Appendix, p. 228] shows the aisle uncovered in c. 1887.

1835

June 7: Vestry authorizes gallery aisles and stairs to be carpeted to muffle noise from footsteps.
(Vestry minutes)

Dec. 19: Carpet laid for staircases (then at east end) to the gallery and organ gallery.
(Smith diary)

1838

March: J.B. Lapsley paid for carpeting
(Cash Book)

1840

April: L. Eldridge paid for carpeting and oil cloth.
(Cash Book)

Dec. 8: Vestry orders center aisle carpeted.
(Vestry minutes)

1841

September: J. Blackwood paid for installing carpet in center aisle.
(Cash Book & Vestry minutes)

1846

September: Pew floors being carpeted.
(Vestry minutes)

1848

January: McCallum & Co. paid for carpeting and floor cloth.[1]
(Cash book)

Sept. 12: Vestry orders parts of church recarpeted.
(Vestry minutes)

Dec. 27: John Rosencrantz paid $139.30 for new carpet [carpet manufacturer; factory at Apple and Franklin; store at 32 S. Front St.]
(Cash Book)

1851

June: Parish pays for linen stair carpeting
(Cash Book)

1856

J.H. Orne paid for carpet for vestry room.
(Cash Book)

1871

Dec. 12: Vestry decides that replacing the aisle carpets was "inexpedient" at the time and would leave uncovered. [Some time that year, it may have removed the central aisle carpet.]
(Vestry minutes)

1874

June 9: Vestry repairs committee reports that the carpets in the church are very worn and need replacement.
(Vestry minutes)

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[1] A large display advt. in Gopsill's Directory identified the partners as Hugh McCallum, Orlando Crease and Andrew Sloan, "manufacturers and importers," who operated the Glen Echo Carpet Mills in Germantown, with a store and warehouse at 1012-14 Chestnut St. [Workshop of the World, p. 3-11,12]

1875

October - December: McCallum, Crease & Sloan, carpet suppliers, paid $568.88. [This order may have involved only the gallery carpets.][2]
(Cash Book)

1912

June 11: Vestry to estimate cost of carpeting "the Deaconess pew and certain gallery pews." [All of the deaconesses from the Deaconess House at 709 Spruce Street attended service in a body].
(Vestry minutes)

1922

March 13: Some [pew] carpets and upholstery to be renewed.
(Vestry minutes)

1950

May 16: Vestry orders all pews to be recarpeted.
(Vestry minutes)

June 27: Parish paid Gimbel Brothers $2,452 for carpet.
(Cash Book)

1958

May 27: All worn-out carpet in the galleries to be replaced this summer.
(Vestry minutes)

1959

Nov. 24: Vestry resolves to install new carpet in the gallery pews.
(Vestry minutes)

1992

The existing carpeting is limited to floors of the pews and the two aisles of the galleries.

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[2] Until 1875, their Germantown mill had made "ingrain" carpets, but that year it began producing "power-loomed Wilton and Brussel carpets." [Workshop of the World, p. 3-11,12]

As is typical of the maintenance record of many features in St. Peter's, the chronology of the coved ceiling's plasterwork is very sketchy. While the ceiling, which is original, was patched periodically, there appears to be no conclusive record of its ever having been entirely replastered. Despite a newspaper notice in 1875 that the ceiling had been "frescoed," there is no apparent physical evidence of any decorative treatment other than periodic repainting. More likely, what the account referred to was the decorative border, presumably a goldleaf stencil, that crowned the heads of the gallery windows and crossed the walls like a beltcourse. [See c. 1887 view in Appendix, p. 228.] [1]

1758

Aug. 5: "...that the frame of a Circular Ceiling shall be made and fixed under the Roof ready for the Plaisterer to lath and plaister on together with a larger Cornice under the Spring of the Arch for the Circular Ceiling..."
(St. Peter's Building Contract: CC Archives)

1842

Sept. 26: "...a heavy wood cornice around ceiling and ceiling arched...."
(Franklin Fire Insurance Survey #4192 - HSP)

1846

Aug 15: John Rice to install a central ventilator in ceiling (estimate cost at $100-150). The vestry is also considering whether to replaster the ceiling and repaint the building. [Rice, a builder, also operated a lumber yard at 6th and Coates.]
(Vestry minutes)

1874

June 9: Repairs committee reports that the plaster ceiling is falling in some places. [Water leaks from the roof were a re-occurring problem, despite the wood-shingle roof having been covered with a raised-seam tin roof in 1848.]
(Vestry minutes)

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[1] Dr. Roger W. Moss, an authority on Victorian interior decoration, says that by the 1870s in America, "frescoed" had come to mean any polychromed decorative wall scheme including stenciling.

1875

Sept. 10: "The interior of the church has been entirely repainted and the ceiling frescoed..." following "extensive repairs and improvements" by the architectural firm of Furness & Hewitt.
(Philadelphia Inquirer, p. 3)

1974

June 19: Vestry accepts bid from a Mr. McQuade to insulate the ceiling for $1,400 [part of the 1976 Bicentennial renovations].
(Vestry minutes)

1979

June 20: Vestry approves the insulation of the ceiling with a light-weight material by Academy Insulating Co. for $2,967; also to seal the central ventilator.
(Vestry minutes)

1981

March 19: Vestry to hire masons, who are repairing the church wall, to "close the opening [air space] between the tower and the church ceiling" for $835.
(Vestry minutes)

CHANCEL

In contrast to affluent 18th century English churches that normally boasted marble floors, St. Peter's chancel, like many American colonial chancels, was raised one step upon a wooden platform. The reredos or wooden panelling behind the altar contains a wooden base relief garland of carved grapes and a sheaf of wheat that symbolize the Eucharist. The altar or Holy Table is a Chippendale piece, although its origins are unknown based on church records. The turned wooden balusters carrying the walnut rail across the chancel are typical of English churches of early 18th century, and traditionally served the added practical function of preventing stray dogs from urinating on the Holy Table. St. Peter's also followed the English practice of placing a Glory or sunburst on the ceiling above the chancel -- the carved base relief sunburst is not original, but was created for the organ gallery built above the chancel in 1789. From about 1848 to 1875, the church and chancel woodwork were painted several dark colors, including a red lead and maybe brown, giving the interior a dark Gothic feeling [see c. 1858 photos in Appendix, pp. 226-227].

1763

March 2: Building Committee reports St. Peter's completed except for the chancel and pulpit.
(CC Vestry minutes)

1764

April: Robert Smith had presented his bill for building the pulpit [presumably he had completed or was close to completing the reading desk, sounding board, and chancel rail.]
(CC Vestry minutes)

June: Robert Smith had presented a bill for £285.13 for the pulpit, reading desk, and rails around chancel.
(CC Vestry minutes)

1789

January: "A design having been formed to remove the organ in St. Peter's Church from the place where it now stands to a gallery to be built for it over the chancel and a drawing or elevation of the organ so stated being laid before the vestry." [Vestry committee to oversee consists of Messrs. Towers, Wynkoop and Benjamin Chew Wilcocks. Estimated cost: £110.]
(CC Vestry minutes)

1833

Sept 10: Vestry to examine whether the chancel railing could be altered to allow the clergy to pass between the railing and the pillars supporting the organ case above.
(Vestry minutes)

1837

April 26: Cast-iron columns installed to support organ case over chancel. [Presumably, added weight from the new organ installed in 1829 and from the choir presented a loading stress that needed to be corrected.]
(Smith diary)

December: R. Lyndam paid for varnishing chancel railing, chairs and font.
(Cash Book)

1842

Following the donation of six new bells by Benjamin Chew Wilcocks (the gift that led to construction of the belltower), the vestry initially considered whether to reverse the plan of the church and place the chancel at the west end with the pulpit removed and placed to the side.

Sept. 26: "...a chancel at east end with heavy turned balusters and heavy handrail of walnut."
(Franklin Fire Insurance Survey #4192 - HSP)

1844

April 26: The rector, the Rev. William Odenheimer, suggests that the chancel be reconfigured for more convenient serving of communion; vestry appoints committee to study.
(Vestry minutes)

1853

August: Gas fixtures from Strattan & Bro. have been installed in the chancel.
(Cash book)

1858-60

Stereoscopic photo by McAllister & Bro. shows chancel woodwork painted a dark color. Central panel of reredos reads:

"Do this in remembrance of me
As often as ye eat this bread, and
Drink this cup ye do show the
Lord's death til he come."

(Photo and Print Collection -- Phila. Free Library)

1870's

Each side of the chancel contained portraits of Bishop William White and the Rev. Dr. William Smith. White wore a powdered wig, and Smith, the provost of Penn in the mid-18th century, was pictured sans wig in a black gown trimmed with the crimson stole of Oxford University.[1]
(Watson's Annals of Philadelphia, v. 3, p. 268)

1879

Dec. 9: A group of women from the church received vestry permission to alter the chancel and restore the reredos inscription above the Holy Table. [The minutes give no indication what "alter" meant; presumably, they repainted the inscription dating from at least the 1850s that still is used today.]
(Vestry minutes)

1902

August: Photograph of chancel and organ case shows the present stained-glass east window installed in 1887; woodwork is light colored again.
(Philadelphia Historical Commission files)

1914

Dec. 8: A new corona [small gas chandelier] to be hung over the chancel in memory of the Rev. A.J. Miller.
(Vestry minutes)

1950

May 16: To remove four gaslight sconces in the chancel. [The church had been electrified in 1926.]
(Vestry minutes)

May: Three new pine kneeling benches designed by George B. Roberts were built for the altar rail.
(Parish records)

1932

Slender wooden columns supporting the organ case are replaced with cast iron; and two "ugly" iron-pipe supports are removed from just inside the chancel rail. [This

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[1] These paintings survive today and hang in St. Peter's House, 313 Pine St., the present parish building.

occurred as part of the installation of a new (and larger) Skinner organ in which the organ loft was likely reinforced structurally.]
(Robinson history)

1974

June 19: To repair the reredos panelling behind the altar [as part of general renovations for the 1976 Bicentennial].
(Vestry minutes)

1977

May: Mentally disturbed arsonist sets fire to the Holy Table resulting in small charring of the reredos panel [all restored and repainted by September]. At the time, the central panel contained the following inscription - a very minor (spelling) variation on the c. 1858 inscription:

"Do This In Remembrance Of Me
As Often As Ye Eat This Bread
And Drink This Cup Ye Do Shew the
Lord's Death Till He Come."

(Collection of the Rev. F. Lee Richards)

FLOORING

Like many of the church's features, the exact chronology of the main floor is uncertain. The original floors may have been brick, although in the absence of any clear record confirming the installation of the present marble tiles (center and eastern cross aisles), the presumption could be that brick was laid in the side aisles before being replaced by the present heavy slate or flagstone blocks sometime prior to 1842.[1] On the other hand, the replacement of a brick floor by slate flagstone has not been documented either. In the fall of 1783, there is some evidence of major repairs or renovations to the interior, suggesting, perhaps, a date for the installation. Despite this uncertainty, it does seem likely that the oak floor joists and pine boards upon which the pews stand are largely original.

1783

October: Alex Miller paid for carting 14 loads of gravel to St. Peter's yard.
(CC Accounting Warden -- entry: May 27, 1784)

Nov. 8: G. Stokes paid for cleaning church after "the inside repairs."[2]
(CC Accounting Warden)

1785

July 21: Christ Church repairs committee orders brick flooring laid in church.
(CC Vestry minutes)

1786

Nov. 24 to Dec. 2: John Palmer paid £36 for "paving" at St. Peter's [either brick flooring or exterior sidewalks].
(CC Accounting Warden)

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[1] In the appendix to Bishop DeLancey's sermon celebrating St. Peter's centennial, published in 1862, it is noted that the marble tiles had been an early gift to the parish.

[2] Dorr noted in his parish history that large repairs were made this year to St. Peter's and Christ Church totaling over £1,000 [p.204].

1788

April 1788 to Feb. 1789: Numerous entries for "brick paving" at St. Peter's and alterations and repairs at Christ Church. [Doesn't specify if paving interior or exterior.]
(CC Accounting Warden)

1842

Sept. 26: At this time, the central aisle and transept [in front of the chancel rail] were covered with white marble; the side aisles were dark slate; the raised pews sat on yellow pine boards over oak joists.
(Franklin Fire Insurance Survey #4192 - HSP)

1900

February: A descendant from Pittsburgh of Dr. John Morgan receives vestry's permission to investigate whether Morgan's remains are buried under the floor near the pulpit. [Nothing was found.]
(Vestry minutes)

1977

Sept. 21: Before the new carpet was installed in the chancel, a number of floorboards were removed by the rector, the Rev. Lee Richards, for an inspection -- it appeared to him the flooring was original and still sound.
(Vestry minutes)

The north and south galleries originally were each serviced by staircases at the east and west walls [see 18th century floor plan, Appendix, p. 215]. Each staircase consisted of two flights of open newel stairs with winders, similar to a "bandbox" staircase [see the insurance survey description for 1842]. In his 1909 history of the parish, Charles H. Jones wrote that the west-end stairs were eliminated as early as 1789 when the organ case was removed from the north-side gallery. Jones probably reasoned that the organ case split the gallery in two, necessitating access from either end. Removal of that obstacle eliminated the need for stairs at both ends. Just as likely, the west-end stairs were taken out because Morning Prayer service in the 18th century was oriented toward the reading desk and pulpit. The potential annoyance of late arrivals interrupting the service as they trooped up the west side to the galleries could be avoided by eliminating their option. [This source of distraction was further reduced sometime around the 1830s when a set of panelled wood vestibules was built to enclose the west-end doorways and the staircases to the galleries.] The architect George B. Roberts, who designed the existing staircases in 1960, initially believed that only one set of stairs had existed, and that William Strickland had switched them to the east end in 1842 when he added the bell tower. But a memo from the vestry committee overseeing the 1960 alterations noted that four staircases had originally existed. In either case, after the west-end stairs were removed, two alcoves were fashioned out of the resulting space, which eventually contained stoves that were set up seasonally.

1789

Charles Henry Jones wrote in his history of the parish that when the organ was moved from the north gallery to the loft above the chancel, the western stairs were removed and relocated to the east end. [In fact, it is much more likely that a set of stairs originally existed at the east end, thus involving not a transfer but a removal of one pair of staircases.]

(Jones, Old St. Peter's Church, Philadelphia: 1761-1909)

1842

Sept. 26: The galleries are supported by "14 turned columns"; 29 gallery pews each side; yellow-pine floor boards. At the east wall, "two flights of open newel stairs, square steps and winders, painted handrail, close

string, turned balusters; a flight of straight stairs to the organ gallery."[1]
(Franklin Fire Insurance Survey #4192 - HSP)

1845

April 1: Vestry names committee -- vestryman and builder D. Henry Flickwir and accounting warden Francis Gurney Smith -- to improve the east-end stairways to the galleries. [Little came of this until at least 1848.]
(Vestry minutes)

1848

May 19: Vestry's Repairs Committee decides to go ahead with needed renovations including improved access to the galleries.
(Vestry minutes)

June 13: Repairs Committee [from the same vestry that hired William Strickland] submits plans and letter from architect Thomas U. Walter to improve stairs to the galleries. [Estimates $100 to complete work; church to be closed July and August for repairs.][2]
(Vestry minutes)

Dec. 28: By this time, only the galleries offered room for visitors, the ground-floor pews were filled.
(Vestry minutes)

1860

Jan. 12: Vestry considering whether to attach doors to the gallery pews to arrest cold drafts coming up the stairways; later that year they decided to attach the doors.
(Vestry minutes)

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[1] The set of stairs described here were then the original surviving pair of gallery staircases built by Robert Smith.

[2] A small unattributed note in the file on St. Peter's at the Philadelphia Historical Commission says that Walter designed "iron spiral" staircases for the galleries. Although Walter's diary (1845-38, v. VII) contains entries for July 1848 indicating that he designed staircases for St. Peter's (as well as alterations for the pulpit), there is no mention of the staircase's type. Walter certainly employed iron as a building material in his work, but no other evidence has been found to corroborate this claim. It is possible that the original "winder" staircases that he replaced may have somehow been confused through history -- like a rumor that changes from repeated telling -- for a spiral type.

1889

March 12: Gallery stairs at east end only. [The west end contained alcoves where coal stoves may have stood until replaced in 1875 by a coal-fired furnace in the tower's cellar.].
(Vestry minutes)

1896

April 6: Vestry may have ordered the rebuilding or replacement of Walter's 1848 staircases at the east end.
(Vestry minutes)

1900

March 3: "The gallery pews are practically full, only one of them being rented."
(Vestry minutes)

1932

Measured drawings made by a team of surveyors from the Philadelphia Chapter of the American Institute of Architects indicate two straight flights of stairs with a middle landing. [Presumably, these staircases were either Walter's surviving 1848 design or those inserted in 1896.]
(St. Peter's Parish Records)

1949

May 20: As early as this date, the architect George Roberts, who was then chairman of the property committee, indicated his willingness to "rebuild" the gallery stairs in the west alcove as part of a larger proposed renovation.
(Roberts Papers - HSP)

1959

Nov. 24: With the parish's 1961 bicentennial two years away, the vestry resolved to replace the existing staircases at the east end with "appropriate" structures, and install new stairs at the west end "as they were originally."
(Vestry minutes)

1960

From January through August, the architect George Roberts worked on a series of drawings that would alter the interior of the church in time for the parish's 1961 bicentennial; among those were drawings that created the present sets of gallery stairs at the west and east ends.
(Roberts Papers - HSP)

HEATING

During the 18th and most of the 19th centuries, wood (and later coal) stoves were set up within the church during the winter months and removed when the warm weather returned. Their exact locations is unknown. What is known, however, is that the west-end alcoves shown as "fireplaces" in the 1792-c. 1823 plan [see Appendix, p. 216] contained stoves from about 1789 to 1875. A photograph of the chancel taken about 1858 shows clearly a long metal pipe coming out of a barrel-shaped stove near south-side pilaster of the organ gallery [see Appendix, p. 226]. Sometime before 1842, perhaps in 1839-40, two pairs of brick chimneys intended for stove pipes, were added to the north and south walls.[1] In 1875, the architectural firm of Furness & Hewitt renovated the building and installed a coal-fired central furnace in the cellar of the bell tower, employing either a vented hot-air or steam-radiator system. This immediately improved the sanctuary's appearance which had been plagued for years by "unsightly stoves and pipes."[2] Some time after this, probably in 1878, the old stove-pipe flues in the north and south walls were altered to accept gas burners. The burners, which were serviced through small iron doors on the exterior of the chimney "pilasters," heated air inside the flues and were likely meant to supplement the central system which may have been found inadequate to heat the church.[3]

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[1] [Note the sketch made by R.S. Smith in 1842 before the bell tower shows the chimneys in place; see Appendix, p 223.] The stack sections above the roofline were removed in 1956, but the lower portions, which appear from the exterior as shallow brick piers attached to the walls, still remain. The tops of the chimneys were cut down to just below the roof line and are clearly visible (and accessible) within the trusswork of the roof. The top of one chimney contains evidence of a large cylindrical feature, probably a metal air duct, having once been attached to its inboard side at an angle directed toward the middle of the roof (see footnote #2).

[2] The wood and coal stoves always presented problems because of their fumes; in all likelihood, the insertion of the central ceiling ventilator in 1846 was an attempt to solve part of church's ongoing heating and ventilation problems. This large circular vent originally featured a system to regulate its air flow that was controlled by lines and pulleys from inside the roof. Air from the church exhausted up through the vent may have been directed outside through stove pipes that ran transversely from the ventilator to the brick chimneys.

[3] While the mechanics of this system is largely conjectural and needs to be assessed by material investigation, it appears likely that air heated in the flues moved by convection through

The 1875 coal-fired furnace may have been replaced sometime before 1909 when the church was being heated by steam radiators supplied by a low-pressure coal-fired boiler. In 1946, that second coal furnace was replaced by an oil-fired boiler that has been replaced three more times since then by more modern units.

1782

January - February: Several entries for deliveries of wood and repairs to the wood stoves [probably making new stove pipes].
(CC accounting warden)

Nov. 14: One cord of hickory wood purchased for St. Peter's.
(CC accounting warden)

Dec. 14: John Snider paid for putting up the stoves in both churches; other entries show that workmen were paid to split wood.
(CC accounting warden)

1784

Nov. 15: Paid £97,5s for lead to place under St. Peter's Church stoves [probably a lead fireproof base to stand the stoves upon].
(CC accounting warden)

1787

Feb. 20: William Roberts paid £7,18s "for work repairing the damage done by fire at St. Peter's Church" [perhaps from a wood stove].
(CC accounting warden)

1791

April 1: Henry Schively paid £10 for a "tinplate stove" and its installation.
(CC cash book)

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openings at the ground and gallery levels into metal or wooden ducts and into the church through metal grates. The only surviving elements of this system are the wooden ducts with metal grates that look like boxy baseboards set against the outer gallery pews. On the ground floor, the ductwork may have run under the raised floor of the pews and exited through baseboard grates which would have been removed and sealed after a more efficient system replaced them, perhaps around the turn of the century.

1792

Jan. 25: Henry Schively paid £22,3s for new wood stoves for St. Peter's.
(CC accounting warden)

1798

Jan. 2: Paid man for "putting up stoves."
(CC accounting warden)

1829

Jan. 10: Henry Abbott paid $49 for repairs to stoves.
(CC accounting warden)

1839

June 11: Action on estimate from Wheeler and Cooper to install a coal furnace was set aside. [blacksmiths at 100 Locust St.]
(Vestry minutes)

1840

Dec. 8: Committee appointed to study whether church could be heated by a furnace or furnaces [didn't specify what fuel type].
(Vestry minutes)

1842

A color engraving of the west elevation of St. Peter's made shortly before the bell tower was constructed shows two chimneys rising out of the north-side roof eave, suggesting that the brick piers that form the [now unused] chimney flues had already been built. [Drawn by R.S. Smith, engraver, and reproduced by J.H. Richard, lithographer.]
(Collection of St. Peter's Church)

Sept. 26: "...two flues on the north and south sides for stove pipes...." [4]
(Franklin Fire Insurance Survey #4192 - HSP)

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[4] This suggests that the brick chimneys visible in photographs on the north and south walls from 1860 onward, and clearly noticeable in R.S. Smith's 1842 engraving, actually existed here earlier than the bell tower addition that year.

1846

Aug. 15: Central ventilator in ceiling installed. [Presumably, this fixture served to vent coal gases as well as hot air in the warmer seasons. Prior to 1875, a coal stove was kept during the cold months in the middle of the central aisle beneath this vent.]
(Vestry minutes)

September: Purchased 15-barrel load of charcoal [presumably this meant the same thing as coal].
(Cash book)

1848

Dec. 12: Vestry resolves to keep western doors closed during service [presumably if the stoves were located in alcoves next to the west doors, this would have helped keep the heat indoors].
(Vestry minutes)

1849

January: Paid for tin screens for the stoves.
(Cash book)

c. 1859

Stereoscopic view of interior shows large barrel-shaped stove near chancel with long metal stove pipe leading toward south wall; and a similarly large stove sitting in the west-end alcove near the northwest door.
(Photo and Print Collection -- Phila. Free Library)

1860

Photograph taken from the northeast corner of Third and Pine Streets shows the church with two brick chimneys rising out of the brick piers on the north wall of the building.[5]
(Print Collection - HSP Manuscripts Room)

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[5] Photo credited to McAllister & Bro., identified in McElroy's City Directory for 1858 as "William Y. and Thomas H. McAllister, opticians, at 728 Chestnut St." [Photo was clearly taken before the George M. Wharton School was built in 1870 since its site-to-be is occupied by a large brick row house. For the same view photographed with identical features in 1868, see Appendix, p. 225.]

1863

March 10: Vestry orders the church windows opened after each service -- for a half an hour or more on Sundays and 15 minutes on weekdays. [Probably needed for ventilation from the sulfurous gases of the coal stoves. Daily services begun in 1843 may still have been conducted.]
(Vestry minutes)

1871

Jan. 11: Henry Hill paid for "mending stoves."
(Cash Book)

1874

June 9: Repairs committee says the stoves need to be moved into a basement location [like Christ Church] "and thus relieve it from unsightly stoves and pipes, and from the dust and gas, their usual attendants." [6]
(Vestry minutes)

1875

Sept. 10: The coal stoves have been replaced by a furnace located in the cellar furnished for $2,500 by James P. Wood Co.[7]
(Philadelphia Inquirer, 9/10/75; Cash book)

1877

Dec. 11: In response to several complaints, something is to be done about the church ventilating system.
(Vestry minutes)

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[6] According to Charles H. Jones, two stoves stood in the western alcove and one in the middle of the center aisle. [Jones, St. Peter's, 1761-1892: A Sketch]

[7] Most probably, a coal-fired, central boiler system ordered by Frank Furness. The James P. Wood Co. ran a full-page insert in the 1875 city directory advertising its line of Gold's patented "steam and water heating apparatus for warming and ventilating public buildings...with pure external air." However, the company also advertised Gold's steam-radiator systems as well. The old coal-chute opening, which appears as a sealed-up segmental archway, remains on the north side of the bell tower, just west of the vestibule entrance.

1878

Sept. 12: Vestry committee authorized to have chimney flues altered.
(Vestry minutes)

1909

By this year, the church was heated by steam radiators that may have replaced the 1875 system introduced by Frank Furness. [An old radiator perhaps of this vintage survives in the choir vesting room (second floor) of the bell tower.][8]

(Jones, Old St. Peter's Church: 1761-1909)

1926

A cork floor was installed in the vestry room "to prevent [coal] dust from the furnace sifting through."
(1927 St. Peter's Yearbook - HSP)

1946

Oct. 29: Leaking hotwater conductor pipes on the south side of the church that ran above the plaster ceiling and over the wall had caused plaster to fall off the inside wall. [These pipes were probably located within the open ceiling molding that extends around the top of the walls.]
(Vestry minutes)

Nov. 19: Sandler and Furnham Co. to install new oil-burning furnace for steam-heat system (plus fuel tank and controls) for $900. The impetus came from an organ tuner's report that coal gases were seriously damaging certain parts of the organ [presumably those pipes located behind the pulpit].
(Vestry minutes & Geo Roberts Papers - HSP)

1948

Sept-Oct: New oil tank for furnace installed.
(Vestry minutes)

1957

April 25: W. H. Nester, roofer, 6110 West Oxford St., paid for removing four roof chimneys.
(Collection of the Rev. F. Lee Richards)

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[8] Steam was supplied by a low-pressure coal-fired boiler located in the cellar beneath the bell tower. [The Philadelphia Contributionship fire insurance policy #5829)

1958

May 27: Parts of the north and south walls required replastering from old leak marks originally caused by stove pipes, now sealed at the roof line.
(Vestry minutes).

1959

Oct. 27: Per order of the city fire marshall, a fire-proof ceiling has been installed in the basement boiler room.
(Vestry minutes)

Nov. 24: To install all new heating system including furnace, hot-water plumbing and electrical wiring [installed late 1960].
(Vestry minutes)

1965

New copper-lined pipes replace all boiler room pipes
(Parish Annual Report)

1978

June 21: M.A. Snyder Co. to install new boiler for $1,320.
(Vestry minutes)

1982

Jan. 20: A new hot-water heater has been installed.
(Vestry minutes)

1987

Oct. 28: A recent fire in the boiler room, apparently caused by the boiler burner, has indicated that the furnace has serious structural problems.
(Vestry minutes)

1988

Jan. 27: To install heat sensitive detectors in boiler room.

Dec. 12: Boiler has broken again and will soon need to be replaced at an estimated cost of $12,000-15,000 [boiler problems have become chronic in the last three years].
(Vestry minutes)

1989

Sept. 27: New church boiler to be installed next week for $17,000.
(Vestry minutes)

The 1837 candle chandeliers were given away in October 1848 during major renovations that included the introduction of gas lighting.[1] The Church of the Holy Innocents in Highland Falls, N.Y., received six lamps and a chandelier.[2] A second chandelier was given to the Episcopal church in Doylestown. Also an unspecified number of "lamps" were given to All Saints Church, Moyamensing, built in 1846 at 12th and Fitzwater, but moved in 1909 to 12th and Snyder. In 1979, the Rev. Christian Wolf, then rector of Holy Innocents, wrote in a letter to the Rev. F. Lee Richards, then rector of St. Peter's, that two chandeliers of the same type hung in the church.[3] Innocents also kept four wall lamps of similar design. The principle chandelier had been electrified at the turn of the century.[4] At that time, the glass hoods were inverted, although Mr. Wolf was not sure whether they had handled gas or oil before.

St. Peter's converted to gas in the summer of 1848 after gas service had been available from the street since 1836. The vestry, however, did not introduce gas lights to their first-floor meeting room in the tower until 1857, presumably preferring oil lamps. The church remodeled its gas fixtures twice -- first in 1875 during the Furness renovations and then in 1890 after a parishioner donated new fixtures for the pulpit and reading desk -- before converting to electricity in 1926. Most of the existing

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[1] By contrast, Christ Church probably did not convert to gas until 1867. [Peter Parker, "Historical Sketch," The Archives of Old Christ Church, 1981.]

[2] The probable connection between the parishes was the Rt. Rev. William Delancey, the former rector from 1836-1839, who consecrated Holy Innocents in 1847 while Bishop of Western New York. Holy Innocents was the work of Robert Weir, a professor of architecture and engineering at the nearby U.S. Military Academy at West Point, and was designed in the current Gothic Revival style. Ironically these 18th century chandeliers, designed for an Enlightenment-Age Protestant church, found new life in a medieval-revival building, the very type that Horace Binney had desired for St. Peter's in the early 1840s. Recall that 1848 was the year that John Notman began St. Mark's Church, a model of the correct English Gothic style that the conservative Anglo-Catholic reform movement promoted within the Episcopal Church.

[3] Letter dated Nov. 26, 1979 from the Rev. Christian R. Wolf to the Rev. F. Lee Richards [Collection of the Rev. Richards]

[4] The conversion was paid for by the financier, J.P. Morgan, who was then rector's warden of the Holy Innocents.

electrical fixtures, like the lights hanging from the gallery and the gallery wall lights, date from this conversion.

1766

Nov. 20: Joseph Richardson paid for box of "spermacaeti" [whale oil] candles. [This type of entry appeared frequently.]
(CC accounting warden)

1822

New brass chandeliers and smaller branches for pulpit and reading desk purchased.
(CC Vestry minutes)

1835

Sept 15: One of the two main chandeliers has fallen and been damaged; both are removed and better fixtures are requested.

(Vestry minutes)

1836

Committee appointed to study the possibility of new lighting schemes following the fall of the chandelier in Sept. 1835.
(Vestry minutes)

Feb. 10: Gas lights are installed on the streets near the church for the first time.
(Smith diary)

1837

Feb. 5: New lamps lit for first time that replaced the original candle chandelier that fell in 1835.
(Smith diary)

May: J.M. Coffee paid $20 for four-candle chandelier from "Exchange." [Perhaps from the Merchants Exchange by William Strickland completed in 1833.]
(Cash Book)

July: R. Cornelius paid for "lighting" the church. [Cornelius & Co. manufactured lamps and chandeliers at 179-181 Cherry St.]
(Cash Book)

1841

January: Backus & Bros. for "champhine" lamps [Oil and lamp supplier, 42 N. 2nd St.]
(Cash Book)

1847

April 13: To obtain estimate of having church lit by gas [supplier: Philadelphia Gas Co.]
(Vestry minutes)

June 8: Strattan & Bro. estimates $300 to install gas pipes; vestry sets matter aside.
(Vestry minutes)

1848

April 13: Vestry still considering introduction of gas lighting.
(Vestry minutes)

April 18: Repairs committee presents estimates for needed church renovations including the introduction of gas lighting.
(Vestry minutes)

Oct. 12: The candle branches were given away after being replaced by gas sconces during the summer-long renovations.
(Vestry minutes)

1852

May: Strattan & Bro. install gas lights in Bell Ringing Room following March 9 request by the bell ringers.
(Cash Book)

1853

August: Strattan & Bro. paid for gas fixtures for the chancel.
(Cash book)

1857

October: Strattan & Bro. paid for gas lights for the Vestry Room.
(Cash book)

1875

Oct 12: Baker, Arnold Co. paid $103.50 for new gas fixtures [part of the Furness & Hewitt renovations which may have included the first gas fixtures to illuminate the pulpit].
(Cash Book)

1882

Interior illustration depicts gaslight stanchions flanking the reading desk and pulpit with opaque glass globes around the gas jets.
("Our Continent" magazine, Oct. 4, 1882, p. 386.)

c. 1886-1890

Photograph of west wall with pulpit and reading desk shows Furness-period gas lights with glass globes described above. [see photo in Appendix, p. 228.]
(Ware, The Georgian Period - 1899)

1890

June 10: Vestry approved designs for new gas fixtures. [Probably replacing Furness's fixtures for the pulpit and reading desk.]
(Vestry minutes)

Dec. 9: Prompted by a parishioner's donation of new gas fixtures for the pulpit and reading desk, the vestry orders 28 new "burners" for the entire church.
(Vestry minutes)

1902

August: Photograph shows the 1890 gas lights that replaced the Furness-period fixtures; also shows the 1890 "burners" that replaced the original 1850s fixtures. [The corona lucis hanging over the chancel hangs presently in the former vestry room in the bell tower.]
(Philadelphia Historic Commission files)

1914

Dec. 8: A new corona [small gas chandelier] to be hung over the chancel in memory of the Rev. A.J. Miller.
(Vestry minutes)

1923

March 13: Vestry hears proposition to electrify the church lighting for $1,385 using the existing gas fixtures, but the motion is postponed.
(Vestry minutes)

1926

April 7: Vestry votes to change the church lighting system from gas to electricity.[5]
(Vestry minutes)

1950

May 16:
- To raise corona over chancel.
- To remove four light sconces in chancel.
- To remove two [former gas] light brackets [attached to the upper panels flanking the pulpit.]
- Install new light for pulpit and refinish reading desk light.
(Vestry minutes; Roberts Papers - HSP)

[5] The wiring and electrical conversion was completed by May but the vestry seems to have purchased new electrical fixtures rather than convert the gas sconces; these fixtures are presently still in use at the church. However, two gaslight brackets flanking the pulpit were converted to electricity and not removed until 1950.

St. Peter's has held six different pipe organs in its 230 plus years. Granted, most of these instruments have endured major rebuildings and enlargements, but the record is still rather remarkable. The record holder for tenure is the present organ, an Ernest M. Skinner Co. model installed in late 1931 and fully restored in 1991. The Cadillac pipe organ of its day, the Skinner, known as Opus 862, was built to complement the church's nationally recognized boys' choir led by the well-known choirmaster and organist Dr. Harold W. Gilbert.[1]

The present pipe case dates from 1767, created for the church's first permanent organ built by Philip Feyring between 1763 and 1767.[2] That organ and console stood in the middle of the north-side gallery [see original floor plan, Appendix, p. 215.] until being moved in 1789 to the present organ gallery over the chancel.[3] Presumably, from

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[1] At the time, Ernest M. Skinner was the most prestigious organ maker in the United States. "Out of about 800 Skinner instruments built between 1903 and 1931, comparatively few remain intact. The pipe organ in St. Peter's is still essentially the same instrument designed by Skinner and therefore is unique in this respect." Large for its limited space, the organ, which cost $23,200 and was built in 1931, is really a "miniature cathedral organ, having great tone of breadth, and capable of creating a vast variety of tonal qualities." [Robinson history] Actually the 862nd instrument built by Skinner, the organ was installed during the tenure of Dr. Harold W. Gilbert, the famed organist and choirmaster of St. Peter's Choir School from 1915 to 1960. During this time, the school's enrollment grew and the exceptional quality of the choir became nationally recognized.

[2] From 1761 to 1767, the church had used a smaller perhaps temporary organ also built by Feyring. Feyring (1730-1767) was a German Lutheran who had created organs for St. Paul's Church (1762) on South Third Street and Christ Church (1766). Born in Arfeld, Germany, he was already trained as a organ builder when he emigrated to America at an early age. No Feyring organs are known to survive today. Feyring died of consumption and was buried in Zion Lutheran Church yard on Franklin Street. [Kenneth F. Simmons, edit. "The Tracker: Newsletter of the Organ Historical Society," v.4, n.1 (October 1959), p. 10-11.]

[3] Addleshaw says that rarely in English churches, mainly in small one-room buildings, were the choir and organ placed in a loft over the chancel. But there were some instances in France and in Lutheran churches. [Addleshaw and Etchell, p. 100.] The relocation created six new pews in the north gallery. The organ console was located at the front of the pipe case on a small choir loft that

the moment the organ first sounded, it became apparent to parishioners that the instrument was too loud for worshippers in the gallery; twice between 1767 and 1789 the vestry studied proposals to move it elsewhere.[4] In 1815, an unknown organ maker largely replaced the Feyring organ. This anonymous model lasted until 1829 when Henry Corrie replaced it with his own model.[5] The Corrie organ survived until 1856 when John C.B. Standbridge built a replacement.[6] Standbridge's organ underwent two major overhauls -- the

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extended out from the gallery. Robinson believed that the original organ by Philip Feyring may have been replaced at this time by the organ he is said to have built for St. Paul's in 1762; however, this has not been documented with primary materials.

[4] Apparently, the organ's size was preventing nearly half of the north gallery from being rented as pew space -- a critical source of parish income along with ground rents from properties throughout the city. The effort to dispose of or move the Feyring organ halted for 15 years because the vestry apparently failed to secure permission from those subscribers who had donated money for the organ.

[5] Henry John or James Henry Corrie (known by either) was born in London in 1786. He probably worked under Thomas Elliott of London for he was sent to Boston in 1822 to install one of the Elliott company organs in Old South Church. Corrie established a reputation for fine work both with the Boston firm of Appleton and on his own. He moved to Philadelphia as early as 1828 and made organs for churches throughout the East and as far west as Cincinnati. [Kenneth F. Simmons, editor. The Tracker: Newsletter of the Organ Historical Society, v. 3, n. 2, January 1959.]

[6] Born in Birmingham, England, John C.B. Standbridge (1800-1871) led a varied career -- from store clerk and chemist, to music teacher, organist and composer -- before becoming Philadelphia's leading 19th century organ builder. When he died, the Public Ledger ran his obituary on the front page, an indication of his local prominence. Standbridge emigrated to Philadelphia with his parents around 1807. His father was a merchant in the chinaware and wholesale drug importing business. Standbridge graduated from the University of Pennsylvania Medical School about 1822-23, probably as a result of his father's trade in drugs. By 1830, however, he was listed as a professor of music in the city directory, and soon after became organist at Christ Church. He built his first organ in 1840 for the Rev. William Henry Furness's First Unitarian Church at Eighth and Locust streets, and continued through the 1840-50s building organs for churches around Philadelphia. Apparently Standbridge did not go into business full-time until 1854. [Kenneth F. Simmons, editor, "The Tracker: Newsletter of the Organ Historical Society," v. 3, n. 4, July 1959.]

first in 1886 by Hilborne Roosevelt, the second in 1892 by H.C. Haskell -- before finally being retired by the Skinner organ in 1931.

Through all of these changes, the organ console stood in the gallery before the pipe case where the choir sang from. In March 1892, in a move probably related to the arrival of a new rector the previous fall, the console (and choir) were moved to the ground floor near where the present console stands today.[7] The 1931 Skinner organ was restored in phases beginning in the late 1980s and fully completed by 1992. The present console, designed and built by David Harris of Whittier, California, is an exact replica of 1931 Skinner console and was installed in January 1991.

1761

Vestry committee appointed to raise money for a new organ for Christ Church. Entry reads: "...with instructions to make the best agreement they can with Mr. Philip Feyring, who built the organ now in St. Peter's Church, and to employ him in the said service for Christ Church."
(CC Vestry minutes)

1763

March: Vestry agrees to have a pipe organ built by Philip Feyring. [Presumably, this new instrument would have replaced a smaller Feyring organ that the congregation had been using since the church opened in 1761.]
(Dorr's History)

1764

Feb. 21: Benefit concert to raise subscriptions for the Feyring organ is apparently held at the Assembly Room in Lodge Alley.
("The Tracker," v.4, n.1, Oct. 1959)

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[7] Its first position is shown in the 1932 floor plan, see Appendix, p. 217. The console was replaced in 1965 by a new model built by Austin Organs, Inc., in memory of Clarence Brinton [notes of Albert F. Robinson, organist and choirmaster of St. Peter's, 1963-1971]; the Austin console was located two half pews (#67 & 68) to the west and somewhat south, sticking into the rear of the north choir stall. That shift had become possible in 1950 when the two half pews (#35 & 60) just west of the choir on the center aisle were removed so that the choir benches could be shifted west, creating a wider aisle before the chancel. In 1991, the Austin console was replaced by a Skinner replica with its own new location -- it was moved north several feet out of the choir stall area into the space once occupied by pews #67 and 68.

Dec. 10: George Smith paid for working organ bellows.
(CC accounting warden)

1767

The first permanent pipe organ installed. The pipe case and console stood in the middle of the north-side gallery. The clerk's desk, where the congregation was led in singing and responses, was located in front of the organ console.[8]
(F.L.R. notes)

1774

July 12: Vestry moves to dismantle the organ located in the north gallery and store it until the instrument could be sold.
(CC Vestry minutes)

1782

May 11-July 31: Accounting Warden's book contained payments totaling £30 to Godfrey Weisel for repairing the organ.
(CC accounting warden)

June 4: Due to demand for top-rent gallery seats [and probably noise from the organ], a second proposal emerges to move the organ out of gallery.
(CC Vestry minutes)

June 28: The same committee that oversaw construction of the organ gallery at the west end of Christ Church in 1765, recommends that a new organ gallery be built in St. Peter's: "the organ would be much better situated by being fixed at the West end of the Church in a Gallery to be erected for

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[8] This placement in the gallery (or even a singing loft) reflected the traditional 18th century location for organ and choir. George B. Roberts believed that the organ case may have been built by David Tannenberg (or Tannenberger), a Moravian organ builder from Lititz, PA., who in 1769 built similar cases for Trinity Lutheran Church and the First Reformed Lutheran Church, both in Lancaster. Tannenberg (1728-1804) also built pipe cases in the 1790s for Zion Lutheran Church (b. 1790) at Fourth Street near Cherry and the Race Street Reformed Church. Indeed, the surviving case Tannenberg built in the late 1700s for Zion Moselem Church near Kutztown, Berks County, PA., bears similarities to St. Peter's. [Roberts Papers - HSP; article by Dr. John H. Speller, Schuylkill River News (March 1992)]

that purpose."[9]
(CC Vestry minutes; Dorr's History)

1783

Feb. 8: Thomas Mitchell paid for repairing key to St. Peter's organ loft door.
(CC accounting warden)

1789

Jan. 31: "A design having been formed to remove the organ in St. Peter's Church from the place where it now stands to a gallery to be built for it over the chancel and a drawing or elevation of the organ so stated being laid before the vestry." Committee to oversee proposal: Messrs. Towers, Wilcocks and Wynkoop; estimated cost: £110.
(CC Vestry minutes)

Dec. 29: Daniel Knight paid £2,2s "for making rails for organ loft."
(CC accounting warden)

1813

April 10: Vestry committee studying whether to replace Feyring organ: "The Committee are of the opinion that with very little alterations the organ loft of St. Peter's will be rendered sufficiently large to contain an organ of greater powers than are wanted to fit St. Peter's." Vestry approves plan to sell the old Feyring organ and build a new one "with leave also to lower the back part of the floor of organ loft on a level with the front part of it..."
(CC Vestry minutes)

1814

April 18: Vestry resolves to maintain the organ study committee quoted above [suggesting a new one hasn't been built, probably for lack of money].
(CC Vestry minutes)

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[9] Nothing happened for seven years. A common location for the organ in Anglican colonial churches was the gallery at the west end, as in Christ Church, Philadelphia. There were exceptions, of course, like St. Peter's and Bruton Church (1716) in Williamsburg, Va. [Stephen P. Dorsey, Early English Churches in America.]

1815

Sept. 15: An unnamed builder has rebuilt or more probably replaced the Feyring organ for $3,500 within the existing Feyring pipe case.
(Dorr's History)

1818

March 20: Vestryman Horace Binney, Jr. paid $500 for repairs to St. Peter's organ.
(CC accounting warden)

1828

April 24: Organ builder Henry Corrie submits estimate to repair organ.
(CC Vestry minutes)

1829

Jan. 29: Henry Corrie has dissembled the second organ, which replaced the Feyring organ, "for the purpose of using the material for the new one which he is to build."
(CC Vestry minutes)

Nov. 29: New organ by Henry Corrie debuted at the Advent Sunday service; some of the old pipes were re-used for the new instrument. [The pipes and internal workings of the Corrie organ were installed in the 1767 Feyring case.]
(CC Vestry minutes)

1837

Nov. 11: Organ insured for seven years.
(American Fire Insurance Co., Policy No. 9802)

1848

April 18: Estimates given to repair the organ.
(Vestry minutes)

Aug 19; Oct 25; Dec 30; Jan. 18: Henry Corrie paid $222 for repair work to the organ.
(Cash book)

1855

April 17: Organ maker (and organist at Christ Church at some point) John C.B. Standbridge reports that the 1829 Corrie organ "was beyond repair."
(Vestry minutes)

1856

August: John C.B. Standbridge paid the first installment ($250) toward the new $2,100 organ he is making for St. Peter's -- inaugurated into service on Jan. 28, 1857.
(Cash book)

1857

March 10: Written description of new Standbridge organ.
(Vestry minutes)

1886

Hilborne Roosevelt rebuilt and enlarged the Standbridge organ, adding another manual to the console.
(F.L.R. notes)

1888

June 12:
- Vestry considering the replacement of the present "double quartet" choir, which sings in the organ gallery, with a men and boys choir to sing on the ground floor near the chancel.
- Also considering the replacement of the organ console from the gallery to nearby the chancel via an electrical connection [that didn't occur until March 1892, probably due to the transition period between the Rev. Davies and the Rev. Vibbert, followed by the latter's sudden resignation].
(Vestry minutes)

1892

March 8:
- Console and choir moved from the organ gallery to the nave near chancel [the organ had by now crowded out the console].
- Charles S. Haskell of William Haskell Co. rebuilds, electrifies, and adds fourth manual to the organ for $8,000 (first electric-action organ in the church).[10]
(Vestry minutes)

1908

Vestry to raise money for a new echo organ to be installed in the tower behind the pulpit within the foundation of the original bell cupola, and the choir organ to be placed in a

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[10] The company was actually identified in Gopsill's City Directory for 1892 as "Haskell Bros., 1520 Kater St.," and besides Charles, consisted of William H., George W. and Henry J. Haskell.

basement chamber under the choir stalls. [Apparently, the project stalled until 1911, perhaps due to fundraising. The echo organ was suspended from the ceiling on a wooden framework by iron rods that remain in place today.]
(1927 Parish Yearbook - HSP)

1911

A choir organ was placed in a brick-lined vault specially created underneath the choir stalls; the sound rose through iron grates beneath the seats.[11]
(Roberts' history)

1919

H.C. Haskell of William Haskell Co., a Philadelphia organ maker, removed many parts of the Standbridge organ for repairs. [The source of the problem was probably the choir organ in the vault beneath the choir stalls since water was seeping into the space after rainfall.]

1921

March 8: H.C. Haskell, the organ maker, has refused to return the organ pipes taken out for repair in 1919 due to a contract dispute.
(Vestry minutes)

1931

November: The E.M. Skinner Organ Co. of Boston completed a new three-manual organ costing $23,200 that was installed in the old Feyring case. Twice the size of the Standbridge model it replaced, the Skinner filled the entire space in the loft once occupied by the organ console. A new echo organ was installed behind the pulpit, perhaps in the same framework created in 1908.]
(Robinson history)

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[11] Dampness and occasional flooding later ruined this organ and the apparatus was removed, probably in 1928. The vault, which drops over 9 ft. below floor level, measures 8 x 21 ft. The hollow bricks of which it is constructed are painted with a black tar-like paint, apparently applied as water proofing. The southeast corner contains a brick structure opening onto a large clay culvert pipe that leads southeast into a second smaller vault under the southeast gallery staircase. The larger vault apparently contained a bellows or air blower, in addition to pipes, that supplied air through the culvert for the pipes in the organ gallery above.

1965

The 1931 Skinner console was replaced by a new console built by Austin Organs, Inc., given in memory of the late Clarence Brinton.
(Robinson history)

1992

Nov. 24: Restored E.M. Skinner organ and its new replica console rededicated. [The console, which cost $340,000, had to be replicated by Harris Organs, a custom builder in Whittier, California, because the Skinner Organ Co. had gone out of business. Support for the entire restoration project were raised through a fund drive that began in 1988.]

ORGAN PIPE CASE AND SCULPTURE

While St. Peter's first pipe organ was completed by Philip Feyring (1730-1767)[1] in 1767, the architect George B. Roberts believed that the organ case itself may have been designed by David Tannenberg (or Tannenberger), a Moravian organ builder from Lititz, PA., who in 1769 built similar cases for Trinity Lutheran Church and the First Reformed Lutheran Church, both in Lancaster. Tannenberg (1728-1804) also built pipe cases in the 1790s for Zion Lutheran Church at Fourth Street near Cherry and the Race Street Reformed Church. Indeed, a surviving case that Tannenberg built in the late 1700s for Zion Moselem Church near Kutztown in Berks County does bear similarities to St. Peter's.[2] Beatrice Garvan believed that St. Peter's case may have been inspired by a book illustration from Batty Langley or James Gibbs.[3]

Initially, the pipe case stood in the center of the north gallery, but the noise it generated and the valuable pew space it occupied prompted the vestry to finally move the case (and console) to a new gallery built over the chancel in 1789 by the carpenter Samuel Sims. The console sat before the case on small choir loft that extended out from the gallery. The large flanking pilasters that help support the gallery were added in 1797, presumably because the original construction was felt to lack sufficient strength. In fact, over the next nine years, the gallery continued to need attention especially in 1805-06. The following year, the parish appears to have commissioned the noted sculptor William Rush to carve two wooden urns -- presumably the two that stand today upon the outer piers of the pipe case.[4] The existence of these Rush pieces may help explain why in 1831 St. Peter's was given three of Rush's carved figures by St. Paul's Church: two female figures that stand today upon the flanking pilasters and a

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[1] See Organ timeline for Feyring's biographical sketch.

[2] Roberts Papers - HSP; article by Dr. John H. Speller, Schuylkill River News, No. 49, (March 1992).

[3] Garvan, "St. Peter's Church," Three Centuries of American Art, Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1976.]

[4] Rush (1756-1833), the cousin of Dr. Benjamin Rush, had begun his career as a carver of ship figureheads but evolved into one of the first great sculptors in early America.

cluster of cherubims resting atop the central pipe case.[5] St. Peter's reportedly requested these pieces from St. Paul's when the nearby church began to remodel its interior in 1829-30 and removed the sculpture from its own organ case.[6]

1767

The first permanent pipe organ built by Philip Feyring was installed. The pipe case and console stood in the middle of the north-side gallery. The clerk's desk, from which the congregation was led in singing and responses, was located in front of the organ in the gallery.
(F.L.R. notes)

1789

Jan. 31: "A design having been formed to remove the organ in St. Peter's Church from the place where it now stands to a gallery to be built for it over the chancel and a drawing or elevation of the organ so stated being laid before the vestry." Committee to oversee proposal: Messrs. Towers, Wilcocks and Wynkoop; estimated cost: £110.
(CC Vestry minutes)

Dec. 29: Daniel Knight paid £2,2s "for making rails for organ loft."
(CC accounting warden)

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[5] The Rush sculpture had originally been carved for a new organ case completed in 1813 for St. Paul's Church on South Third Street. Rush was paid $150 for two female figures and a cluster of winged cherubs' heads surrounded by a Glory: "Praise," the figure on the right pilaster, plays a harp; "Exhortation," on the left pilaster, leans on two books, presumably the Old and New Testaments, and gestures upward toward Heaven. The four winged cherub faces within the Glory probably were meant to symbolize sacred music or the presence of God within the church. Rush carved the pieces in 1812, about the same time that he created crucifixes for St. Augustine's and St. Mary's churches, both of which have been lost. [Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, William Rush: American Sculptor, (Philadelphia: PAFA, 1982, p. 130-132.] In 1830, William Strickland was hired to remodel the interior of St. Paul's. This was probably the project in which the Rush sculpture were removed and given to St. Peter's [Tatman and Moss].

[6] Morris Stanley Barrett, History of Old Saint Paul's Church: 1760-1898 [from anonymous notes excerpted in June 8, 1952; collection of the Rev. F. Lee Richards]

1790

April-August: A number of entries for payment suggest that Samuel Sims [or Simes] was the builder-carpenter in charge of the organ loft [Sims was finally paid in full April 2, 1793].
(CC accounting warden)

1798

Jan. 7: A.M. McColleck paid for building two pilasters to support the organ case.
(CC accounting warden)

1805

March 11: John C. Stocker and Daniel Smith appointed committee "to cause the pews and organ gallery to be repaired..."
(CC Vestry minutes)

1806

April 14: Committee reappointed to consider repairs to organ and gallery.
(CC Vestry minutes)

Nov. 8: John C. Stocker paid £87,6s, "one of a committee for repairing organ gallery of St. Peter's." [The gallery may not have been strong enough to support the pipe case and console.]
(CC accounting warden)

1807

Jan. 13: William Rush paid £18,15s for "carving urns" [presumably the wooden urns located on top of the organ case flanking the carved cherubims.]
(CC accounting warden)

1813

April 10: Vestry committee studying whether to replace organ: "The Committee are of the opinion that with very little alterations the organ loft of St. Peter's will be rendered sufficiently large to contain an organ of greater powers than are wanted to fit St. Peter's." Vestry approves plan to sell the old Feyring organ and build a new one "with leave also to lower the back part of the floor of organ loft on a level with the front part of it..."
(CC Vestry minutes)

1815

Sept. 15: An unnamed builder has rebuilt the Feyring organ for $3,500 within the existing Feyring pipe case.
(Dorr's History)

1829

Nov. 29: New organ by Henry Corrie debuted at the Advent Sunday service; some of the old pipes were re-used for the new instrument.[7] [The pipes and internal workings of the Corrie organ were installed in the 1767 Feyring case.]
(CC Vestry minutes)

1831

March 3-7: William Rush's sculpted female figures and cherubims donated by St. Paul's Church were placed by the builder (and vestryman) D. Henry Flickwir on the pilasters flanking the pipe case.
(Vestry minutes; Smith diary)

1833

Jan. 15: "The other part of the organ front" including the "balls" were gilded.
(Smith diary)

1837

January: T. Sharpless paid for damask curtain for organ gallery [presumably, to surround the organ console].
(Cash book)

April 26: Cast-iron stanchions installed to help support the organ gallery; in May, L. Mayer was paid for the stanchions.
(Smith diary; Cash book)

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[7] Henry John or James Henry Corrie (known by either) was born in London in 1786. He probably worked under Thomas Elliott of London for he was sent to Boston in 1822 to install one of the Elliott company organs in Old South Church. Corrie established a reputation for fine work both with the Boston firm of Appleton and on his own. He moved to Philadelphia as early as 1828 and made organs for churches throughout the East and as far west as Cincinnati. [Kenneth F. Simmons, editor. "The Tracker: Newsletter of the Organ Historical Society," v. 3, n. 2, January 1959.]

1838

August: John B. Newberry paid for painting the organ case. [Painter and glazer who worked out of 104 N. 8th St.]
(Cash Book)

1842

Sept. 26: "...an organ gallery at east end supported by two large open pilasters on pedestals with architraves, frieze and cornice, two large neat urns on the top of them, two plain turned wood columns and two cast-iron columns, neat wainscoted front, circular ends...."
(Franklin Fire Insurance Survey #4192 - HSP)

1888

August: "the organ loft still retains the old-fashioned poles and red curtains...." [probably the damask curtains first noted in 1837]
(Philadelphia Press, 8/12/88)

1892

March 8: Organ console moved from the gallery to the groundfloor near chancel. [Apparently, the central grill of the case, which had been occupied by the console until this point, was created later to fill the gap.]
(Vestry minutes)

1932

Complete new organ by the Skinner Organ Co. installed in the old Feyring case. The cast-iron stanchions supporting the organ gallery that stood just inside the chancel rail were removed [apparently after the inner framework of the structure was re-engineered to support the added weight of the new organ].
(Robinson history)

1937

Jan. 12: Vestry to loan the William Rush sculpture of "Exhortation" and "Praise" to the Philadelphia Museum of Art for an exhibition.
(Vestry minutes)

1982

March 17: Vestry to loan the William Rush sculpture to the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts for an exhibition.
(Vestry minutes)

The original color scheme seems to have involved whitewashed walls and light cream woodwork.[1] At some point in the early 19th century, probably in 1837 just after Bishop William White, the rector of 57 years, died the previous year, the 18th century appearance was transformed. The Enlightenment Age brightness, personified in a sense by Bishop White, gave way to the first of at least three woodwork colors befitting the Anglo-Catholic movement's taste for darker Gothic tones.[2] The first darkening may have occurred as early as 1837 when James Newman was paid for "coloring" the walls.[3] A second scheme, involving tan

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[1] The characteristic white walls and spare ornamentation of Anglican colonial churches gave their interiors a "cold brilliance" more closely resembling Christopher Wren's London churches and contrasting dramatically with the dark medieval English parish churches. [Dorsey, p. 26.]

[2] The late 1830s through the 1840s was the period when the Oxford Movement in England came to influence certain sectors of the American Episcopal Church. Overall, it had a profound effect on American church architecture, helping popularize the Gothic Revival, while Philadelphia provided some of the earliest American models with St. James the Less (1846-49) in East Falls and St. Mark's (1848-51) at 1625 Locust St. With the passing of Bishop White in 1836, a new generation of ministers, like William DeLancey and William Odenheimer after him, were influenced by this Anglo-Catholic movement. The vestry came under its sway as well -- realize that the 1837 vestry was the same that would add a cross in 1842 to the new spire. This initially scandalous step amounted to a "popish" display, as "low church" Protestants would sneer. And while the 1840s congregation was never persuaded to demolish, and therefore repudiate, its now awkward Enlightenment Age building, as vestryman Horace Binney Jr. so passionately desired [Binney, "To the Parishioners of St. Peter's Church," The Banner of the Cross, April 8, 1848, p. 106-107.], it did at least continue the Gothic transformation that year, presumably by painting the woodwork an even darker "Pompeian red." [Paint Analysis of St. Peter's Chancel Panelling, July 22, 1977, by Mary Mish, National Park Service; her 13-sample analysis, confined to the chancel panelling and admittedly unreliable as a building-wide basis for extrapolation, found that Pompeian red (2.5 R 3/6 or 2.5 YR 3/6: Munsell Color System) was the last dark layer before succeeding layers of cream or white (2.5 Y 8.5/2 or 2.5 Y 9/2.]

[3] This may have involved the faux painting of the gallery walls to simulate dressed ashlar stone. This effect is faintly visible in the c. 1858 photo of the west wall [see Appendix, p. 227]. On the other hand, it may have involved a wood graining of

and mauve tones, may have occurred in 1846 with the Rev. William Odenheimer then rector.[4] The third and perhaps final darkening occurred in 1848 as part of a larger renovation and repainting of the entire building.[5] The interior remained dark until 1875 when Frank Furness, known ironically as an architect of the High Victorian Gothic mode, restored the original whiteness to the woodwork as part of another major renovation -- this one geared to the Centennial Exposition of 1876.[6] Since Furness, the

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the chancel panelling or doorways, perhaps in an oak simulation. [Mary Mish, chancel paint analysis, July 22, 1977; Collection of the Rev. F. Lee Richards]

[4] Odenheimer, rector from 1840 to 1859, was a High Churchman in the early 19th century sense, who instituted daily Morning Prayer and weekly Holy Communion. The previous rector, the Rev. William DeLancey had left the parish by the spring of 1839 to become Bishop of Western New York. Odenheimer, who was an assistant minister and who would officially succeed DeLancey in 1840, probably served as interim rector and through his enthusiasm (and the vestry's) for the new Anglo-Catholic liturgical movement may have been instrumental in further transforming the interior into a dark "gothic" space.

[5] Despite the architect Thomas U. Walter's partial involvement in this project, it appears unlikely that he actually directed the color selection. More likely, it was arrived at through some committee arrangement among the vestry and other influential parishioners. This scheme is shown in two photographs made c. 1858 [see Appendix, pp. 226-227, Photo and Print Collection, Phila. Free Library]. During extensive renovations in 1875, the pew seats were reinforced with new wooden brackets. Many older brackets were removed but their "ghosts," created by previous overpainting, remain on the undersides of many seats. These paint layers suggest that during the dark "gothic" period, predating the 1875 renovations, the pew walls were painted a light mocha brown.

[6] Note that Furness's interior did not involve a scrupulous 18th century restoration but probably allowed for some decorative floral stenciled bordering around the walls and windows of the gallery. [See c. 1887 photo in Appendix, p. 228, from Ware, The Georgian Period, Boston: American Architect and Building News, 1899.] The stenciling was probably painted out in 1896. While the parish records have suggested no other author for this treatment, and while its style would fit the Furness & Hewitt portfolio, the only account of the renovation notes the interior had been "entirely repainted and ceiling frescoed." [The Philadelphia Inquirer and The Evening Bulletin, Sept. 10, 1875] A "ceiling frescoed," while not expliciting meaning the ancient technique, does suggest the writer meant the ceiling and not the wall.

interior has retained its sense of 18th century character through at least four successive re-paintings; the last thorough interior job occurred in 1974 in time for the Bicentennial celebration. Be advised that this analysis is largely conjectural, based on a small sampling done of the chancel's reredos panelling in 1977. The interior requires thorough professional paint analysis -- both walls, ceiling and woodwork -- before any definitive conclusions can be drawn regarding its chronology.

1762

Dec. 16: John Stagg, painter, paid in part £115,18s.
(CC Accounting Warden)

1763

Feb. 9: John Stagg, painter, paid in full £22,12s,7p.
(CC Accounting Warden)

1783

Dec. 8: John Weaver paid £45,5s for painting St. Peter's.
(CC Accounting Warden)

1791

June 9: Vestry building committee reports the estimated total cost to whitewash the church inside and out at £270. [The actual cost came to £475.]
(CC Vestry minutes)

1792

Aug. 15 - Oct. 6: James McLaughlin [or Laughlin] paid £75,9s for painting church.
(CC Accounting Warden)

1814

April 18: Vestry appoints committee to have church painted and whitewashed.
(CC Vestry minutes)

1828

July - August: Church painted inside and out.
(Smith diary; CC Accounting Warden)

Oct. 10: Lawrence Lewis paid $365 for painting and repairs

at St. Peter's. [Lewis was a vestryman who probably advanced the money.]
(CC Accounting Warden)

1837

November: James Newman paid for coloring walls and whitewashing the vestry room. [Newman was identified in the city directory as a whitewasher.]
(Cash Book)

1840

March: John B. Newberry for painting. [Painter and glazer, 104 N. 8th St.]
(Cash Book)

1846

May 12: Vestry hires John B. Newberry for more unspecified painting. A repairs committee report suggests that the panels [perhaps at the chancel] were painted a "lead" color at the time.
(Vestry minutes)

Aug. 15: The ceiling and interior were repainted following the installation of the central ventilator in the ceiling.
(Vestry minutes)

Oct. 12: Church reopened following renovations of ceiling.
(Vestry minutes)

1848

April 18: Vestry repairs committee presents estimates for painting the entire building (including the ceiling and steeple), part of larger renovation project.
(Vestry minutes)

July 8 - Oct. 17: Various entries by the architect Thomas U. Walter regarding his design for new gallery staircases, alterations for the pulpit, and sketch for a church "drape," but no mention of his devising new paint scheme.
(Diary of T.U. Walter: 1845-48, v. VII)

Sept. 12: Vestry approves the painted inscription -- "Mine House Shall Be Called A House of Prayer For All People" [Isaiah I,6,7,v] -- on the wall above the pulpit.
(Vestry minutes)

Dec. 6: French & Richards paid $53.23 in full for painting.
(Vestry minutes)

1848

Dec. 9: John Gibson, painter, paid $450.
(Cash Book)

1850

February: John Gibson paid in full for painting church.
(Cash book)

1855

Sept: John Gibson paid for varnishing doors.
(Cash Book)

1856

October: John Gibson paid for painting and gilding.
(Cash book)

c. 1859

Interior photo show dark woodwork including chancel and pulpit.
(McAllister & Bros. stereoscope -- Phila. Free Library)

1860

John Gibson paid for painting church.
(Cash book)

1873

March 11: Vestry plans to thoroughly repaint interior including some "graining" [of woodwork. The project is delayed, however, until 1875.]
(Vestry minutes)

1874

June 9: Repairs committee reports that the church interior was last thoroughly painted and regilded 25 years ago. [Actually, it was 1848. In their recommendations, they noted the cost of "graining, suggesting that parts of the woodwork had been grained in the past.]
(Vestry minutes)

1875

July-Nov.: Charles E. Blumner Co. paid $2,257 for painting [This painting job returned the interior to the light tones that marked its whitewashed period in the 18th century.]
(Cash Book)

Sept. 10: "The interior of the church has been entirely repainted and ceiling frescoed...."[1]
(Philadelphia Inquirer, p. 3)

1879

Dec. 9: A group of women from the church receive permission to restore the inscription on the wall above the pulpit [first added during the renovation of 1848 and which may have been painted over by the 1875 renovation].
(Vestry minutes)

1896

April 6: Vestry estimates painting interior at $1,500.
(Vestry minutes)

1906

Dec. 11: "effort to be made to paint and repair the church."
(Vestry minutes)

1922

April 19: Interior of the church to be painted [contract awarded to C. Albert Kuehnle Co. Inc., 17th & Vine Sts., for $1,900].
(Vestry minutes)

1936

Jan. 14: Interior walls under the galleries have been painted.
(Vestry minutes)

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[1] It is uncertain what the newspaper notice meant by "frescoed." By this period, "fresco" could mean something like a decorative treatment on a flat surface, not strictly implying the ancient technique with wet plaster. Since there is no record of the ceiling having been decorated nor such ornamentation ever removed, it's possible the reference referred to the band of gilded stenciling that Furness apparently applied around the walls and heads of the gallery windows. [See c. 1887 photo, Appendix, p. 228.]

1950

May 16: Property Committee to hire the Wood-Stretch Co. [2039 Arch St.] to repaint the entire building including steeple [later the painter estimated total at $5,350; $4,450 for interior].

- Interior woodwork (including organ case): used pure white eggshell enamel.
- Interior walls: used linseed oil paint.
- Gold leaf work and relettering by Gustav Ketterer, an interior decorator and designer, Architects Building, 117 S. 17th St. [later estimated cost at $975].[8]

(Parish records; Roberts Papers - HSP)

1956

July 11: Accept bid of a Mr. Gillin to paint church exterior.

(Vestry minutes)

1974

June 19: Accept bid of $17,820 by Kenneth Q. Walker to paint entire building.

(Vestry minutes)

[8] According to a letter that May from the architect George Roberts, chair of the building committee, to Gustav Ketterer, some features were gilded with bronze while others were gold leaf; Roberts asked Ketterer to re-draw the inscriptions over the pulpit and on the reredos "more gracefully" and submit his design for review by Roberts and Joseph Fraser, another member of the building committee and director of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, before the work began. [Roberts Papers -- HSP]

CHURCH PEWS

The 1758 building contract [see Appendix, p. 205] contains no specifications regarding accommodations inside the church. Presumably, the pews, like most of the interior work, were left by Kearseley's building committee to the skill and judgement of Robert Smith -- assuming of course that the committee, as client, had discussed their needs first with the architect-builder. It is also presumed that Smith was familiar with the standard interior furnishings of Anglican parish churches, especially a relatively simple "chapel" as St. Peter's.[1] The number of pews in the church has continually evolved from at least as early as 1776 when a number of large boxes were split into half to create single benchers. This practice has continued throughout the church's history, primarily to accommodate the needs of the congregation and presumably to improve income from pew rentals.[2] The first substantial modification occurred in 1789 when the organ moved out of the north gallery and six box pews were created in its absence.[3] In summer of 1792, the second substantial modification occurred with the addition of 12 pews on the ground floor -- six box pews were added across the west end in the transept aisle, while six

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[1] Sir Christopher Wren is given credit for popularizing the auditory church plan and, by association, the box pew in 17th century England. Ironically, he personally preferred the east-facing medieval-style bench with wide aisle space. [Addleshaw and Etchells, p. 90] Addleshaw believes that box pews originated largely for practical not liturgical reasons -- the high wooden walls protected worshippers from drafts and offered privacy. Adopted almost universally by Anglican congregations in the 18th century, the box pew played an "integral part" in the interior of 18th century churches. Significantly, the smaller pews, or those not three-sided, were usually arranged facing the pulpit and reading desk, not the altar; their usual color treatment was whitewash. [Addleshaw and Etchells, p. 88]

[2] Pew rentals were an Anglican practice going back to the development of box pews. The size and location of a parishioner's pew, as assigned by the church wardens, were often based on social rank and position. Rentals were an essential form of parish income with larger boxes commanding higher rates. Like property, pews were passed down through a renter's family.

[3] See Appendix for 1761-1789 floor plan, p. 215. My research corroborated the finding of St. Peter's Historical Society in the 1950s that the gallery seats were considered a choice location in the 18th century, not the main floor. This is borne out by pew rental rates that were higher for gallery seats than for the ground floor.

other three-sided pews were split in half to create single benchers. [See 1792-c.1823 floor plan in Appendix, p. 216][4] This encroachment into the western transept created narrow conditions in the aisle and probably prompted the vestry to cut off the front of the reading desk to create more room for passage.[5] The two new pews against the north and south walls also blocked half of the western entrance doors, causing further constriction at the west end.[6] Between 1792 and 1892, changes to pews were restricted largely to splitting some larger pews in half or reorienting the direction of the pews against the west wall.[7] In 1892, the organ console was brought down from the organ gallery, knocking out two single benchers on the north aisle for itself and eliminating another five pews on the center aisle for the choir benches. [See 1932 floor plan in Appendix, p. 217.] In 1944, the vestry proposed removal of the pews installed in 1792 and restoring the original width of the

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[4] The Rev. F. Lee Richards, rector emeritus of St. Peter's, should be credited for the thankless job of sifting through the pew rental account books. His research uncovered (and confirmed) the date of the 1792 pew additions, and helped narrow the period to 1792-c.1823 for a first-floor plan that had previously remained unidentified in the parish records [see Appendix, p. 216]. While this plan probably represents that period, the Franklin Fire Insurance Co. survey of 1842 recorded 89 pews on the first floor, suggesting that several half pews may have been restored by this time to full pews.

[5] Note that the 1761-89 floor plan shows the reading desk with a coved front, presumably designed as the Clerke's station to lead the service. [see Appendix, p. 215.]

[6] Assuming that the east-end doors were considered the main entrances to the church in the 18th century, the reduced passage at the west end was probably not as critical as it became in the late 19th and early 20th centuries when the main entrance shifted to the northwest door. [See Church Entrance Doors for more on this transition.]

[7] The historian George E. Thomas believes that during the 1875 general renovations, which were directed by the architect Frank Furness, all of the pew seats were reinforced underneath with gothic-profile wooden brackets. This theory may be confirmed in the future by analysis of paint layers surrounding the "ghosts" of older brackets probably removed during the 1875 repairs. These layers suggest that during the dark "gothic" period, predating restoration of the bright 18th century interior by Furness, the pew walls were painted a light mocha brown.

western transept.[8] For some reason, perhaps due to parishioner objections or connected to the Second World War, the project was only partially completed: the pews against the west wall remained until May 1950, but a carpenter under the direction of accounting warden and architect George Roberts removed pews #11, 12, 44, 51, 83 and 84. [see plan, p. 220.][9]

1761

Aug. 19: Vestry decides to rent pews at the same rates as Christ Church, reflecting the co-equal status of the two churches.
(CC Vestry minutes)

1776

Some of the large three-sided pews were divided into narrow single-bench pews [unspecified location].
(CC Vestry minutes)

1789

The removal of the organ case from the north gallery to a gallery built over the chancel creates six new pew spaces in the gallery.
(CC Vestry minutes)

1790

Nov. 20: "A plan to...erect sundry pews in the westernmost aisles in St. Peter's reducing the width of the side aisles and to carry the plan into execution."
(CC Vestry minutes)

1792

September: St. Peter's Pew Rent Account Book indicates for the first time that 12 new pews now exist on the ground floor.
(F.L.R. notes)

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[8] Contrary to the belief of the 1944 vestry (presumably led in this belief by building committee chairman George Roberts) that the western pews were added in 1842, the pew rental account books and vestry minutes prove otherwise.

[9] A number of these pews -- #11, 12, B, 52 -- plus several other unidentified pew panels are presently being stored in the third floor of the bell tower.

1805

March 11: John C. Stocker and Daniel Smith appointed vestry committee "to cause the pews...to be repaired."
(CC Vestry minutes)

1806

Oct. 6: Vestry "resolved that [if] any fastening is affixed to any pew other than the button in common use," the church warden is allowed to remove it. [The original "button" was probably a small wooden peg as survives in several upper gallery pews today; most of these were replaced, perhaps later in the century, by the present button-like metal fixture.]
(CC Vestry minutes)

1837

March 14: Vestry repeals its 1806 rule prohibiting pew doors from being fastened by other than a "button." [This rule may have been reversed later in the century.]
(Vestry minutes)

1841

November: P.S. Duval for lithographing 50 plans of church. [lithographer, 7 Bank Alley - McElroy's City Directory for 1841]
(Cash Book)

1842

Sept. 25: "...the lower floor is divided into 89 pews wainscoted and painted capping...29 pews each side [of gallery], yellow pine floors in gallery...."
(Franklin Fire Insurance Survey #4192 - HSP)

1848

April 13: Vestry is considering whether to allow pewholders to make changes to their pews at their own expense. [Later that year, permission was granted allowing individual decoration.]
(Vestry minutes)

April 18: Vestry to have the single-bench pews altered by moving the base boards under the next seat, thereby creating more foot room.
(Vestry minutes)

1860

Jan. 12: Vestry considering whether to install doors to the gallery pews [to arrest wind coming up stairway; later that year, they install the doors].
(Vestry minutes)

1892

March 8: Front pews on either side of the center aisle replaced by three rows of choir benches. [Part of the relocation of the organ console from the organ gallery to the groundfloor. Two full pews were removed on the south side (#34,35) and one full pew (#60) and two half pews (#61,62) on the north side.]
(Vestry minutes)

1944

Feb. 15: To remove the box pews installed at the west end in 1842 "to accommodate the increase in the numbers of the parish due to the reforms of Dr. Odenheimer."[10]
(Vestry minutes)

1950

May 16: The carpenter William Wallace was hired to remove six pews and enlarge others at the west end; also to remove pews #35 and #60 on the center aisle abutting the choir benches and expand the benches into those spaces to create a wider aisle in front of the chancel rail. [Wallace was paid $2,792] [11]
(Vestry minutes)

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[10] While approved, the project was only partially completed: the pews against the west wall remained until May 1950, but a carpenter under the direction of accounting warden and architect George Roberts removed pews #11, 12, 44, 51, 83 and 84. [see Roberts plan in Appendix, p. 220.] His goal was to widen the narrow western aisle, especially around the reading desk, and allow the western doors to be restored to their original double-leaf width [the doors were not restored until 1960]. The wider aisle would aid the procession of the choir as well as wedding parties and funerals. [Roberts Papers -- HSP].

[11] As George B. Roberts, then the accounting warden, wrote to one parishioner whose pew was being removed, "It will make the entrance of the choir easier and at [First City] Troop services it will no longer be necessary to proceed in single file through the narrow passage around the reading desk." [May 25, 1950 letter from Roberts to Mrs. George Dallas Dixon Jr.; Parish Records] In another

1974

Oct 9: To shim up some pews along the center aisle and reset the doors of other pews [part of the renovations in preparation for the U.S. Bicentennial.]
(Vestry minutes)

1985

May 15: Vestry is studying the possibility of reconverting some single pews on the north side into their original double-pew size. Cost estimated at $17,500.
(Vestry minutes)

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letter to a second parishioner being moved, Roberts noted that the project would allow "wedding parties to pass up the aisle without having to go single file past the reading desk, to say nothing of coffins."

PULPIT AND READING DESK

St. Peter's pulpit and reading desk were built (and probably designed) by Robert Smith sometime in late 1763. Completed by April 1764, the pulpit resembles several models illustrated in Batty Langley's Treasury of Designs (1750), an architectural pattern book that Smith had purchased in 1751 [Tatman, p. 742]. The front of the reading desk appears to have been semi-circular originally.[1] When the desk was shortened is uncertain; it would have been logical in 1792 when a row of pews were added at the west end, thereby narrowing the cross aisle and constricting the passage space between the new pews and the desk. However, the parish records contain no mention of alterations. Not until 1848, when Thomas U. Walter ostensibly did make "alterations" to the pulpit, is there a probable connection.[2] The vestry may also have asked Walter to reduce the depth of the desk. He may have worked on the desk rather than the pulpit or, then again, he may never have completed the project and only submitted schematic drawings that were ultimately rejected by the vestry.[3] Whatever the actual outcome, the pulpit appears to survive relatively unaltered today while the reading desk obviously has been shortened.

1763

March 2: Building Committee reports St. Peter's completed except for chancel and pulpit.
(CC Vestry Minutes)

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[1] According to a floor plan in the parish records believed to be 18th century (or drawn by someone who recalled the pre-1789 plan), the reading desk was clearly shown with an apse-like front. [see 1761-1789 plan in Appendix, p. 215.]

[2] Thomas U. Walter's diary entry for July 17, 1848, reads: "...to design alteration of pulpit [for St. Peter's]." [Walter diary, 1845-38, v. VII. -- The Athenaeum of Philadelphia] Just what Walter meant by "alterations" could be subject to interpretation. In the early 1980s, when Vernon Perdue Davis and James Scott Rawlings, authors of The Colonial Churches of Virginia, Maryland, and North Carolina: Their Interiors and Worship (1985), examined the pulpit, they detected no obvious architectural changes there, while they did notice a very obvious seam down the side panels of the desk indicating where the woodwork had been cut and rejoined.

[3] The cash book records him paid only $20 in March 1849 -- a seemingly paultry sum even by early 19th century standards for architectural services, unless he donated his services.

1764

April: Robert Smith has recently submitted his bill for building the pulpit.[1]
(CC Vestry minutes)

June: Vestry considers Robert Smith's bill of £285,13s for the pulpit, reading desk, and rails around the chancel.
(CC Vestry minutes)

1822

Vestry purchases new brass chandeliers for pulpit and reading desk.
(CC Vestry minutes)

1842

Sept. 26: "....a neat pulpit and reading desk with a canopy over the pulpit at the west end, a projection stack of the pulpit and reading desk with stairs in it up to the pulpit and to second story of tower...."
(Franklin Fire Insurance Survey #4192 - HSP)

1848

April 18: Vestry to have pulpit repaired by the architect Thomas U. Walter [part of a larger renovation project in which he likely designed new east-end stairs to the galleries].
(Vestry minutes)

December: Abraham McDonough paid for repairing chair for reading desk.
(Cash Book)

1849

March 29: T.U. Walter, architect, paid $20.
(Cash Book)

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[1] This assumes that Smith had also completed the reading desk, the sounding board over the pulpit, and the chancel rail. However, Morris Barrett's History of Old St. Paul's Church (c. 1898) suggests that since the bill did not specify a sounding board, perhaps Smith did not build one. He believed instead that the parish may have inherited St. Paul's board, along with its William Rush sculpture, when that church removed its sounding board during the radical remodeling of 1830.

1854

March: Bailey & Co. paid for silver letters for pulpit.
(Cash book)

1874

June 9: Repairs Committee reports that the pulpit is coming loose from its supports and has worked itself "out of position."
(Vestry minutes)

1875

Sept. 10: The pulpit has been "illuminated" and presumably repaired after the church was closed for "extensive repairs and improvements" by the firm of Furness & Hewitt. [see Appendix, p. 228 for photo of gas lamps on stanchions with glass globes.]
(Philadelphia Inquirer, Sept. 10, 1875)

1950

May: Following the instructions of architect (and accounting warden) George B. Roberts, the arm on the reading desk bench was removed and the bench's length extended north under the pulpit to the doorway.
(Parish records)

1974

June 19: Mr. McQuade to repair panelling behind the pulpit.[5]
(Vestry minutes)

1985

Oct. 16: A mentally disturbed man broke into the church on Oct. 4 and badly damaging the door to the reading desk in an attempt to gain access inside. [Presumably the door was repaired although the extent of that repair is unknown.]
(Vestry minutes)

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[5] During the 1974 renovations, in anticipation of the 1976 Bicentennial celebrations, wood "trim" was added to the reading desk following vestryman Joseph T. Fraser's design.

INTERIOR WALLS

The original building contract of 1758 contains no specifications for construction of the interior walls. The traditional method of plaster coat laid over wood lath may have been considered the only possible convention for interior walls and therefore special mention was presumed unnecessary. Judging by the few entries in the parish records, the walls appear to have undergone little substantial renewal or replacement other than the areas of patching where water leaks caused problems.[1] Any future paint analysis or material inspection of the feature should check for evidence of the stenciled border that extended around the gallery walls between windows, probably from 1875 to 1896 [see Appendix, p. 228].

1842

Sept. 26: "...the building all lathed and plastered...." (Franklin Fire Insurance Survey #4192 - HSP)

1875

July 29: James F. Allen paid $157.85 for plastering. (Cash Book)

1892

Charles Henry Jones, a vestryman, published Old St. Peter's, 1761-1892: A Sketch, showing west wall still bearing the Furness & Hewitt stenciled bordering around the second-floor windows.

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[1] As a general caveat, it should be underscored again that much of the building's repair history was never fully recorded, probably because it was considered the domain of the building or property committees whose various chairmen appear to have chosen not to record their work in the vestry minutes. Presumably, the reason that repairs or other changes often went unnoticed in the minutes -- and therefore also went unrecorded in the parish cash book -- is that the work was often paid by the individual members of the building committee or other parishioners who wished to remain anonymous. Just one example of this phenomenon is the case of vestryman D. Henry Flickwir (1798-1881), a master builder and member of the Carpenters' Company whose crew erected the bell tower in 1842. On April 13, 1849, following the 1848 renovations, the cash book noted that Flickwir, a member of the project's Repairs Committee, was reimbursed $408 for reasons unknown. Most probably, he served as the general contractor, but that fact was never stated there nor in the vestry minutes and can only be surmised through his other activities.

1946

Oct. 29: Defective hotwater conductor pipes above the south wall that ran underneath the roof had caused the wall plaster to fall off the south wall.
(Vestry minutes)

1948

September-October: The exterior of the east wall was repointed where bad leaks had developed behind the organ loft.
(Vestry minutes)

1958

May 27: Sections of the north and south walls required replastering from old leak marks left by former stove pipes. [The stack sections of these brick chimneys had been removed in 1956.]
(Vestry minutes).

1967

Wall plaster near the altar had been peeling off, caused by moisture wicking up the wall from the stone foundation. "Waterproof cement" was applied at the foundation and watertable levels to offset the problem.
(Annual Parish Report)

WINDOWS

Prior to 1974, all of the ground-floor frames and two of those in the gallery (second floor) had become filled with memorial stained-glass windows between 1848 and 1895. While the installation of a few memorial windows can be traced through the parish records, most cannot. The majority were donated between 1875 and 1895, when the vestry forbid further memorials. All of those on the ground floor except the chancel window were removed during the 1974 renovations, in preparation for the 1976 Bicentennial, when the present double-hung sash were installed.

The three-panel chancel or altar window dates from 1887, having replaced the building's first stained-glass window given in 1848 as a memorial to the late Bishop William White. Two years later, the vestryman John Gibson donated two first-floor windows visible in the c. 1858 stereoscope photo of the east wall [see Appendix, p. 226]. In 1875, a major renovation by Frank Furness included filling most of the multi-light sash with what appear to be floral-patterned glass panes [see photo in Appendix, p. 228].

All or most of the windows may have held wooden Venetian blinds (especially in the galleries) as early as 1815 (perhaps earlier) and certainly by the 1850s [see view in Appendix, pp. 226-227]. The two remaining stained-glass windows are the Evans memorials installed in 1875 by Mayer & Co., a German company also based in New York that made the chancel window.

The gallery windows could be original, a supposition based only on the absence of any record of replacement or substantial repair; this would seem unlikely, however, given their good overall condition ["two inch heart of pine plank" was specified in the contract.] The glass panes are opaque, presumably as a means to reduce sun glare; the exact reason for the opaqueness is unknown, again because the parish records reveal no evidence of their replacement.

1758

Aug. 5: "...That there shall be in the South and North Sides aforesaid large Circular headed Windows below or in the First Story and five Smaller Circular headed Windows above or in the Second Story, That the Window Cases and Sashes are to be made by the said [master builder Robert] Smith independent of the Brick Work, That the Sash Lights shall be made of Round two Inch heart of pine plank and the said Smith shall find and provide good English Glass for the same Sash of Ten by fourteen Inches each pane, That in the East End of the Said Buildings there shall be two large Circular headed windows below or in the first Story with One large Venetian Window neatly finished on the outside, That in the

same East End there shall be two Smaller Circular headed Windows above or in the Second Story with one Round Window in the Pedement, That in the West End of the said Building there shall be Three large Circular headed Windows below or in the first Story and three smaller Circular headed Windows above or in the Second Story...That there shall be a Stone Window Stool to each of the Windows to Set the Frames upon with a Moulding on the outer side to project over the Walls to Carry the Water off, That there shall be Key Stones and Imposts or Blocks of Stone to the Arch of each Window..."[1]
(St. Peter's Building Contract: CC Archives)

1759

Feb. 7: Vestry approves Building Committee's decision to alter the windows "in placing the tallest above and shortest below." [This was the reverse of Christ Church's fenestration.] [2]
(CC Vestry Minutes)

1782

Jan. 7: Thomas Mitchell and Jacob Diegle paid 18s,16p for repairing windows in both churches.
(CC Accounting Warden)

1815

Jan. 19-Feb. 25: George W. Hicks paid $107.37 and $102 for "Venetian blinds" [doesn't specify which of the three "United Churches" in the parish].
(CC Accounting Warden)

1835

June 7: [Venetian] blinds built for the two upper western windows.
(Vestry minutes)

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[1] Note that six months later, the building committee decided to reverse the fenestration and place the larger windows in the second floor and the smaller windows in the ground floor. Their reasoning or motivation remains unknown [see 1759].

[2] Marcus Whiffen credited Sir Christopher Wren for first designing larger windows in the second floors of his London churches -- presumably to allow more light into his interiors and for more dramatic play of light around his vaulted plaster ceilings. [Whiffen, p. 14]

1837

October: P. Freeman paid for north-side [Venetian] blinds. ["Peter Freeman, blind manufacturer, 133 1/2 S. 2nd St.;" DeSilver's City Directory for 1837.]
(Cash Book)

1842

Sept. 26: "...the first-story has three 25-light circular top windows each side...two windows the same east and west end; the second story has five 48-light circular top windows on each side, two ditto east and west end, and a large Venetian window in the east end or front, stone sills, blocks and keystones to windows, sash single hung...glass 10 x 14...."
(Franklin Fire Insurance Survey #4192 - HSP)

1848

April 18: Entry makes clear that the church is still using Venetian blinds.
(Vestry minutes)

Oct. 19: First stained glass window approved for St. Peter's -- "The Vision of Constantine," a memorial window for Bishop William White, the rector who had died in 1836.[3]
(Vestry minutes)

1850

March 15: John Gibson, a vestryman, proposes to install two stained glass windows in the east wall of the first floor. Vestry accepts his offer provided that half of the cost can be raised; Gibson will donate $120. [These were probably the two north and south windows on the ground floor visible in the c. 1858 photo; see Appendix, p. 226.]
(Vestry minutes)

October: J.D. Sellers paid for installing protective wire work for the stained-glass east window.
(Cash book)

[3] Originally installed over the altar, the window was later replaced in 1887 by a German-made window, "Suffer the Little Children," and reputedly moved to a south window.

c. 1858

Stereoscopic photograph probably by McAllister & Bro. shows dark-painted chancel woodwork and Bishop White memorial window over the altar in the central panel.
(Photo and Print Collection -- Philadelphia Free Library)

1868

Nov. 16: New interior decorations include "embellishing the lower tier of windows." [Uncertain what that meant, but it may have involved the replacement of clear glass with delicate floral-patterned panes visible in the c. 1887 photo in Appendix, p. 228.]
(Vestry minutes)

1874

June 9: Repairs Committee reported that some window sills had decayed and required replacement.
(Vestry minutes)

1875

May 24: Vestry to allow eight stained-glass memorial windows -- four in the east end and four in the west. [It's not clear what the vestry meant by the "end" of the church. The c. 1887 photo (see Appendix, p. 228.) shows that the southwest windows had not been filled. Presumably, the entry meant to announce the vestry's approval in principal for future memorials.]
(Vestry minutes)

Aug. 7: Aickin & Isaac paid $701.74. [West Philadelphia stained-glass window makers presumably hired by Frank Furness, part of the renovations in anticipation of the 1876 Centennial.][4] (Cash Book)

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[4] One of the Aickin & Isaac windows may survive on the south side of the east wall in the gallery. Simply dedicated "To J.R.E. by his grandson J.R.E. Jr," some controversy may have surrounded this window presumably made for Joseph R. Evans. Following its initial submission, the vestry at first rejected the design: "Having adopted high standards of art, as applicable to such windows, they did not believe that Aickin & Isaac could conform to that standard." By September, however, they reversed themselves for some reason and allowed the window. [Vestry minutes, Dec. 14] This explanation is conjectural since the minutes as well as a newspaper account specified the northwest window where a second memorial

Sept 10:
- "...all of the windows [have been] filled with colored glass of a neat pattern...."
- "One of the large windows in the northwestern angle, opening on the gallery, is a memorial by Mr. Joseph R. Evans to his deceased mother and father. It is of rich colored glass and the designs are beautiful. The centre of the window is filled with a representation of the 'Flight of the Holy Family into Egypt.' Underneath are the coat-of-arms and appropriate inscriptions."[5]
(Philadelphia Inquirer, Sept. 10, 1875)

Dec. 14: The family of the late John Thompson has applied for a memorial window [no location specified], but vestry is still studying the offer.
(Vestry minutes)

1886

April 28: Following an anonymous offer in March for a new altar window, a special vestry committee formed to oversee the alteration has changed its members to include the rector, the Rev. Thomas F. Davies; accounting warden George H. Fisher; and vestrymen Robert M. Lewis; and W. Moylan Lansdale.
(Vestry minutes)

Dec. 14: The vestry awarded the contract for the new altar window -- "Suffer the Little Children" -- to Mayer & Co. of Munich, Germany [who may re-use some of the old stained glass from the two window panels flanking the Bishop White memorial in the central panel; the side panels were apparently in bad repair.]
(Vestry minutes)

1887

March 8: The special committee on memorial windows accepts a modified design for the new altar window.
(Vestry minutes)

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window by Evans to his parents remains; this window, however, was made by Mayer & Co. of Munich, Germany.

[5] This window remains in place today and is clearly marked: "Mayer & Co., Royal Bavarian Establishment, Munich, New York." This was the same company that produced the present chancel window in 1887.

1889

March 2: Vestry considering the placement of the Bishop White memorial window on the south side of church [later placed in the middle ground-floor window of the south wall].
(Vestry minutes)

Nov. 25: Vestry grants permission for "a lady" [no other identity] to install a stained-glass window in the easternmost window in the south wall, conditional on the vestry's design review.
(Vestry minutes)

1891

April 1: Vestry authorizes that two ground-floor windows in the southwest corner be reserved for memorial windows. [Later, at least one window was installed in that corner.]
(Vestry minutes)

1892

Oct. 19: The vestry is reviewing the design of new stained-glass windows to be given as memorials by the daughters of Mrs. Lewis Wister. [No location specified.]
(Vestry minutes)

1895

April 15: Adam S. Conway wins design approval from the rector and church warden for two memorial windows to his parents to be installed in the north wall of the ground floor: they are a stained-glass rendition of Borguersan's painting of the Nativity, and Ruben's "Descent from the Cross." [These became the last stained-glass windows allowed in St. Peter's.]
(Vestry minutes)

Dec. 10: New glass to be placed in the casement frames on either side of northwest entrance door to the church. [At the time, the entrance consisted of a one-leaf doorway because of the pew that blocked the other side of the door.]
(Vestry minutes)

1909

March 28: The Bishop White window may have been removed around this date and broken in the process. It may have been discarded initially, but later rescued and redesigned. [This newer Bishop White window, which had a modern 20th century look, survived until 1974 and may have been created from the

pieces of the original memorial window made in 1848.]
(St. Peter's Historical Society notecard)

1915

April 8: An "appropriate inscription" to be placed on the window in the south aisle in memory of Bishop White.
(Vestry minutes)

1950

June: Unspecified repairs to the windows at $10,50 per unit were made by Joseph C. Huntzman [212 Beck St.], presumably a carpenter hired by George B. Roberts, the accounting warden.
(Parish records)

1951

Jan. 23: To install "window shades" for the gallery windows "with clear glass" [presumably 10 of the 12 at that level].
(Vestry minutes)

1958

Jan. 28: Ten of 12 Venetian blinds [probably from the galleries] stolen from the church.
(Vestry minutes)

Sept. 3: Vestry resolved that "the addition of any stained glass window would be inappropriate to the architecture of St. Peter's Church...." [having just politely refused a parishioner's offer -- probably Mrs. John Cadwalader, a former vestrywoman].
(Vestry minutes)

1960

January - June: George Roberts, in designing the alterations that closed in the end walls of the ground floor, proposed at one point making the west-side gallery windows round, similar to the bulls-eye window in the east gable. [see proposed plan and elevation in Appendix, p. 221.]
(Roberts Papers - HSP)

1963

The Palladian east window was largely replaced along with the other east-wall windows (including the bulls-eye gable window) using Idaho white pine; the carpenter was Melvin H. Grebe [18 Hilltop Rd, Chestnut Hill].
(Parish Annual Report)

1970

Nov. 2: Willet Stained Glass Studios to appraise value of stained-glass windows.
(Vestry minutes)

1974

March 21: Vestry committee estimated that $24,000 would be needed to restore the stained-glass versus $15,000 to install new clear-pane sash.
(Vestry minutes)

April 17: Vestry resolves (9-1) to replace 10 ground-floor stained-glass windows with clear pane; also to preserve the Bishop White memorial window since it was the first stained glass in St. Peter's.
(Vestry minutes)

April 28: During a parish meeting in the interim, opposition surfaced to removing the stained glass; in response, the vestry decided to reconsider its vote.
(Vestry minutes)

May 23: A position letter from the rector's warden, Raymond A. Ballinger (a designer), to the parish outlined the vestry's case for removing the stained glass: Ballinger wrote that the late 19th century was period of "sentimental" religious painting "which cannot be classified as good art or fine art in any sense. It is unfortunate that some of this type of work was literally copied and translated onto glass."[6]
(Parish records)

June 19: Vestry voted 7-1 (Frank Seymour opposed) to accept bid of $9,713 from a Mr. McQuade to replace the stained glass with double-hung clear-pane windows. The Bishop White window will be removed and reinstalled in the altar guild sacristy; also the stained glass in the choir vesting room will be removed along with the stained-glass windows in the east-end sacristies of the first floor; the north, east and south gallery windows will be fit with new Venetian blinds.
(Vestry minutes)

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[6] Since the rector, the Rev. F. Lee Richards, and the vestry believed that the windows' character was out of keeping with the 18th century architecture, their artistic quality inferior, and their current condition poor, the issue became whether more money should be spent in restoration rather than removal.

June: Parish paid $9,740 for the removal of 11 stained-glass windows; the repair of the remaining memorial glass at the gallery level of the west wall; the installation of clear-pane sash, and the reinforcement of the Palladian east window.
(Cash Book)

Sept. 18: Altar Guild rejects the placement of the Bishop White window in their sacristy (it would block the light); the window is boxed and stored in St. Peter's House basement. [To that date, only two of the 11 windows removed had been requested by descendants of the donors.]
(Vestry minutes)

1985

April 17: Willet Studios hired for minor restoration work on the two stained-glass windows in the west wall of the gallery; also to create protective plexi-glass covers, all for $6,780.
(Vestry minutes)

CHURCH ENTRANCE DOORS

Based upon a variety of evidence, it appears likely that St. Peter's main entrance in the 1700s was located at the east end not at the northwest door today. In the mid-18th century, the western "edge of town" began at about Seventh Street since the colonial city concentrated itself along the Delaware River. Third Street was then the primary street, more so than Pine Street -- most public commerce and transportation would have focused on Third which ran directly north to the city's main mercantile and governmental buildings near Chestnut and High [Market] Streets. Not coincidentally, the builders of St. Peter's situated the front or east-end of the church at the northeast corner of their lot at Third and Pine Streets. Here, the front of the church presented itself with a large and impressive Palladian window. Later, in the 1780s, when the parish built a new brick wall around the church yard, they made certain that the impressive view would not be obscured by requiring an iron picket fence along Third Street. Of the two eastern doors, presumably the south door was the preferred entrance. Certainly, the location of the datestone here suggests that probability; and in the northern hemisphere, the south side of a building has traditionally been the preferred elevation allowing for greater exposure to sunlight and heat. It is also clear that many of the most distinguished 18th century parishioners were buried at the southeast corner of the yard, again suggesting that the east end of the yard held a high position of honor because of its immediate prominence upon entering the yard.[1] Last, but certainly not least, the north side of the church in the late 1750s bordered on the Philadelphia Almshouse across Pine Street. The city poorhouse occupied the entire block known as "Almshouse Square" from Third to Fourth and from Pine to Spruce Streets from 1735 to 1767 [Marion, p. 83.]. The location and size of the woefully overcrowded poorhouse with its large outdoor yard, which adjoined the church, suggests that parishioners preferred avoiding its sight (and noise) while attending church. Until the building was demolished in 1767 and a new poorhouse was built at the western edge of town (10th and Spruce), it's unlikely that St. Peter's parishioners would have favored the north side of the church as they did in the later 19th century.

The present entrance doors were built in 1960 and

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[1] Part of the reason that some of the earliest burials were made in this area is that the northwest quadrant of the church yard -- bordered by Pine and Fourth Streets -- was not acquired by the church until 1782, 21 years after the church had opened. [See the Property Conveyance Plan in the Appendix, p. 214.]

designed by architect George B. Roberts. They are supposed to be replicas of the original "great" doors that were removed at least as early as the 1830s when the vestry probably installed wood-frame interior vestibules as means to reduce the heat loss that occurred in the winter when the great doors were opened. At the time, the original doors were replaced by smaller two-leaf doors with fanlight transoms and panelling mounted flush against the large door frames [see c. 1868 photo in Appendix, p 225].

1758

Aug. 5: "...That there shall be in the South and North sides of the said Buildings two Doors Twelve feet high and five feet wide opposite to each other with Frontispieces...That there shall be two Stone steps to each of the four doors or more Stone Steps if Necessary..."
(St. Peter's Building Contract: CC Archives)

1829

Lithograph of St. Peter's by William L. Breton from Third and Pine Streets (pre-tower and spire) shows the original 18th century full-length "great doors." [see view in Appendix, p. 222.]
(Photo and Print Collection, Philadelphia Free Library)

1834

Dec. 9: Vestry authorizes a "light, low-priced door" to be installed in the northwest doorway. [Presumably, this may have been like a storm door for an interior vestibule.]
(Vestry minutes)

1835

June 7: Vestry votes against removing "bulkheads" [interior vestibules] from around the northeast and southeast doors. [This entry suggests that the east-end doors were still considered the primary entranceways but that would shift to the west end later in the century with the new "high church" liturgy.][?]
(Vestry minutes)

[?] These vestibules were probably removed in 1949-50 but are visible in a 1932 section elevation [see Appendix, p. 218] and the 1908 photograph of the east side [see Appendix, p. 229].

pre-1842

Undated and uncredited sketch of northeast elevation (pre-bell tower) shows the original "great doors" on the north side have been replaced by smaller panelled doors set beneath fanlight transoms mounted flush with the door frames.
(Photo and Print Collection -- Philadelphia Free Library)

1842

Sept. 26: Each side of the church contains "two doorways with pediment heads and panel doors and stone sills."
(Franklin Fire Insurance Survey, #4192 - HSP)

1848

Dec. 12: Vestry resolves to keep western doors closed during services.
(Vestry minutes)

1860

Photograph taken from the northeast corner of Third and Pine Streets shows the north side of church with the original great door replaced by the smaller fanlight transom doors.[3]
(Print Collection - HSP Manuscripts Room)

1895

Dec. 10: New glass panes to be installed in window frames on either side of the northwest church door.
(Vestry minutes)

1923

Exterior wooden vestibule [storm shelter] to be built onto the northwest door for $200.
(Vestry minutes)

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[3] Photo credited to McAllister & Bro., identified in McElroy's City Directory for 1858 as "William Y. and Thomas H. McAllister, opticians, at 728 Chestnut St." [Photo was clearly taken before the George M. Wharton School was built in 1870 since its site-to-be is occupied by a large brick row house.]

1944

Feb. 15: Architect George Roberts recommends removal of the box pews added in 1842 against the west wall. This would eliminate the narrow aisle at the reading desk and allow the west-end entrance doors to be restored to their original size. [While the vestry approved the change, the project was not fully completed until May 1950.][1]
(Vestry minutes)

1949

May 3: The interior vestibule at the northeast doorway may be repaired or rebuilt, according to an unsigned letter this date to the Rev. Allen Evans, rector of St. Peter's.
(Parish records)

May 20: The vestry was now considering removal of the interior vestibules around the northeast and northwest doorways. Architect George Roberts wanted to remove the vestibules and restore the doors to their original 18th century height.
(Roberts Papers - HSP)

1951

Jan. 23: George Roberts had designed a brick vestibule for the northwest door; although "generally approved," the proposal was tabled.
(Vestry minutes)

1959

Nov. 24: In anticipation of the parish's 1961 bicentennial, the vestry decided to restore the four entrance doors to their full-height 18th century character.
(Vestry minutes)

1960

September-November: New reproductions of the 18th century entrance doors were installed. [Unlike the originals, these doors designed by George Roberts opened out to comply with modern fire codes.]
(Roberts Papers - HSP)

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[1] See Roberts's 1944 plan for the pew alterations in Appendix, p. 220; compare against 1932 floor plan in Appendix, p. 217.

The trusswork for the roof is based on an early 18th century English framing method employed where a vaulted ceiling like St. Peter's projected above the wall plate, could present a structural problem.[1] This type could be described as a king-post truss with a raised collar beam braced by pairs of hammerbeams. The raised collar or tie beam type was often used in English churches with arched ceilings by architects like Sir Christopher Wren. For example, an illustration in Francis Price's The British Carpenter (1733), a carpenters' manual familiar to builders like Robert Smith, contains one truss that could have been the exact model for St. Peter's. Perhaps more interesting is the illustration in plate VII of The Carpenters' Company 1786 Rule Book for a "60' Roof Truss with `Arched Ceiling.'[2] Since the truss is practically identical to St. Peter's, whose roof just happens to be 60 ft. wide, and Robert Smith (1722-1777) was recognized as one of the Company's greatest master builders, the suspicion naturally arises that the Company had turned for their sample model to the work of a past master whose work was still considered contemporary.[3]

The church also originally possessed a wood-shingle roof that probably gave the vestry repeated headaches with its propensity to leak. It's more likely, however, that the real cause resided in the parish's failure to properly maintain the roof [see 1791]. In any case, the vestry decided in 1848 to cover the wood shingle with metal sheathing, and the roof has maintained that type of material ever since.

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[1] David T. Yeomans, "British and American Solutions to a Roofing Problem," Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians, v. L, n. 3, (September 1991), p. 266-272.

[2] Charles E. Peterson, editor, The Carpenters' Company of the City and County of Philadelphia 1786 Rule Book, (Princeton: The Pyne Press, 1971).

[3] Nicholas L. Gianopulos, a professional structural engineer, whose Philadelphia-based firm, Keast & Hood Co., has worked on many historic structures throughout the region, has inspected the trusses in recent years with Suzanne M. Pence, also of Keast & Hood, and believes it to be original. Pence also has found the trusswork that Robert Smith created for Old St. Paul's (1760-61) to be virtually identical. The age of St. Peter's truss timbers has also been confirmed within the past year by dendrochronological testing supervised by Penelope Batcheler, AIA, architect of Independence National Park, National Park Service.

1758

Aug. 5: "...That the Roof of the said Building shall Trussed well framed and bound with Iron..."
(St. Peter's Building Contract: CC Archives)

1763

March 19: Mr. Stillwaggon paid for wooden shingles.
(CC Cash Book)

1789

Jan. 31: Roof is leaking and needs reshingling.
(CC Vestry minutes)

1791

June 9: Vestry building committee reports that "they find it [St. Peter's roof] in a very decayed state and are of the opinion that it ought to be new shingled without a loss of time, that if it is not done in the course of this summer there is great reason to believe that the sealing [ceiling] will be much injured if not destroyed." [Note: the roof is only 30 years old by this year and probably has been little maintained.][4]
(CC Vestry minutes)

1828

July-August: "St. Peter's had a new [wood shingle] roof put on it and was painted inside and outside in the months of July and August."
(Smith diary)

July 10: H. Hickerin paid $747.74 for [wood shingle] roofing.
(CC accounting warden)

1842

A color engraving of the west elevation of St. Peter's made shortly before the bell tower was constructed shows two

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[4] In a 1708 letter to a friend, Sir Christopher Wren complained that church officials in general often neglected the roofs of their buildings: "The Church-wardens care may be defective in speeding mending drips; they usually white-wash the church, and set up their names, but neglect to preserve the roof over their heads." [Addleshaw and Etchells, p. 248.]

ripped away by storm winds.[7]
(Vestry minutes)

1872

April 3: Vestry approves painting of roof.
(Vestry minutes)

1904

Nov. 25: Tin roof needs replacement because of water leaks.
(Vestry minutes)

1926

June 8: Vestry expects to install new copper roof for $6,000.
(Vestry minutes)

1947

June 10: Roof to be repaired where necessary and repainted by East Coast Steeplejack Co., 6201 Christian St.
(Vestry minutes)

1952

July 8: Roof to be repainted.
(Vestry minutes)

1955

Oct 24: Roof has suffered recently from wind storms; requires repairs and repainting.
(Vestry minutes)

1956

Sept. 25: Vestry to hire roofer, W.H. Nester, 6110 West Oxford St., for $3,000 to remove the four chimneys [two each on the north and south walls], and repair gutters and some rotten roof rafters and cornices.
(Vestry minutes)

1974

April 17: Pinemar Co. to install new tin sheeting

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[7] In the attic, on a principal rafter near the roof hatch, is painted "A. Cline, May 21, 1866" in reddish brown letters, another indication, like James D. Hill in 1848, of the roof painter's work.

[presumably galvanized steel] over the surviving 1828 shingle roof for $22,750. [At the time, church officials believed that the shingles were the 18th century originals.]
(Vestry minutes)

1978

Oct. 18: The paint applied to the new tin in 1975 has failed; Joseph Ottaviano, the painting contractor, will apply a new high-quality coat at no cost. Architect and parishioner Daniel Cathers asked to recommend a color.
(Vestry minutes)

1979

Sept. 19: The McQuade Co. hired to reinforce the roof trusses.
(Vestry minutes)

1982

Oct. 27: The A. Raymond Raff Co. hired for $12,615 worth of roof repairs to resolve a number of leaks.
(Vestry minutes)

1986

May 21: Vestry reports that half of the roof has been painted; the other half will be painted next year.
(Vestry minutes)

EXTERIOR WALLS

Judging by the parish records, the brick walls of the church appear to have experienced little physical change other than from routine maintenance.[1] The only known modification to the walls involved the addition of four brick flues, probably about 1839-40, inserted in pairs on the north and south walls between the three middle windows [see c. 1868 view of north wall, Appendix, p. 225]. While their stacks were removed in 1956, the lower flues were left and currently appear like narrow pilasters on the walls. From the 1860s to as late as the 1920s, the parish allowed ivy vine to grow over much of the building. The 1868 view [Appendix, p. 224.] shows vines on the tower's south side already beyond the second floor. By 1913, the vines had overgrown the entire tower and much of the east wall with thick ivy hanging over the Palladian window and obscuring the gallery windows. Although the ivy removal was not recorded, the project must have entailed extensive cleaning and repointing of the brickwork, perhaps sometime in the 1930s. The most recently recorded cleaning and repointing of the entire building occurred during the 1974 renovations, although portions of the bell tower were repointed in 1984.

1758

Aug. 5: "...the Foundation of the same Building shall be Stone and Mortar four feet below the present Surface of the Earth, That the Bottom or lower part of the said Stone Foundation shall be three feet in Thickness and at the top thereof two feet three inches thick, That the walls above the said Foundation shall be Thirty-Seven feet high and composed of good Merchantable Brick and Mortar and to be two bricks and a half or twenty-one Inches thick in the sides of the said Building and Gable Ends or Walls in the pedements [pediments] above the Square to be one Brick and a half or fourteen Inches thick and to be Carryed up or raised as high as the top of the Roof, That there shall be Rustick Work on each Corner of the said Building to be made of Stock Bricks properly Moulded for that purpose, That a Margin shall be made of the said Stock Bricks round each Window of the said Building to Project before the face of the Walls...That there shall be a Stone Window Stool to each of the Windows to Set the Frames upon with a Moulding on the outer side to project over the Walls to Carry the Water off, That there

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[1] Existing conditions in April 1992 showed a number of areas where brick has deteriorated and been patched, otherwise the walls appear to be holding in very good condition.

shall be Key Stones and Imposts or Blocks of Stone to the Arch of each Window..."
(St. Peter's Building Contract: CC Archives)

1842

A color engraving of the west elevation of St. Peter's made shortly before the bell tower was constructed shows two chimneys rising out of the north-side roof eave, suggesting that the brick piers that form the [now unused] chimney flues had already been built. [Drawn by R.S. Smith, engraver, and reproduced by J.H. Richard, lithographer.]
(Collection of St. Peter's Church)

Sept. 26:
- The church walls measured 36 ft. from groundlevel to the roof sill and were 22 inches thick at the sill.
- "...two flues on the north and south sides for stove pipes...." [the chimney tops were removed in 1956].
(Franklin Fire Insurance Survey #4192 - HSP)

1875

Oct. 2: Bishop & Bray, bricklayers, paid $28.25, [presumably for minor repointing repairs].
(Cash Book)

1899

Dated photo shows tower completely covered in ivy.[2]
(Campbell Collection, v. 89, p. 8 -- HSP)

1918

The church brickwork is described as "being almost black with age," and the tower covered with ivy vines.
(Robert Shackleton's The Book of Philadelphia)

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[2] The walls of the tower and church building endured a period extending roughly from the 1860s to as late as the 1930s when the parish allowed thick ivy to cover much of the building. A photograph, probably taken in September 1868, shows the vines already beyond the second floor of the tower's south side. By 1913, vines extended up the full length of the tower and in the summer months obscured the windows; the east wall of the church shared the same predicament with thick ivy hanging over the Palladian window and covering the gallery windows. Often the destructive effects of ivy on brick pointing were overlooked or ignored in return for the "romantic" or picturesque effect that it supposedly lent "antique" landmarks.

1956

Sept. 25: Vestry to hire roofer, W.H. Nester, 6110 West Oxford St., for $3,000 to remove the four chimneys [two each on the north and south walls], and repair gutters, rafters and cornices.
(Vestry minutes)

1967

The mortar in the east-side watertable and the stone foundation was extensively repointed with "waterproof cement" to offset moisture in the wall causing plaster to peel off the interior wall near the altar.
(Parish Annual Report)

1974

March 21: Vestry accepts bid by William Watts, Inc. to chemically clean and waterproof the walls of the bell tower. [The $19,450 project included replacement of the old flue, probably first installed in 1875, that ran from the boiler room to the tower parapet, and repair of the interior brickwork.]
(Vestry minutes)

1984

May 23: Jack Hassler Co. to repoint a portion of the bell tower brickwork for $3,200; work to begin in July.
(Vestry minutes)

EXTERIOR WOODWORK AND PAINTING

The exterior of St. Peter's has been painted at least eight times, according to the records cited below, however that number seems improbably low. Like much of the parish's repair and maintenance history, the extant parish records unfortunately do not contain the complete story. The records never indicated what colors were used either, but based on old photographs and illustrations, as well as the conventions of 18th century Anglican church architecture, it would be safe to assume that white was the color of choice. St. Peter's exterior paint layers have never been analyzed, but the exterior of Christ Church, its sister parish, was studied in 1978 by Frank Welsh, who found the original colors had been yellowish white in the 18th century;[1] and with the exception of the 19th century "gothic" period, when it was brownish to simulate brownstone, the woodwork (excluding the doors) remained white.

1758

Aug. 5: "...That there shall be a larger Modillion Cornice to the Eves and round the said Building..."
(St. Peter's Building Contract: CC Archives)

1836

May 16: David Fisher began painting the exterior woodwork. [Coincided with the new rectorship of the Rev. William DeLancey.]
(Smith diary)

1848

April 18: The vestry's repairs committee presented its estimates for painting the church exterior [part of the extensive 1848 renovations].
(Vestry minutes)

1860

April 17: Vestry refers the question of painting the exterior to the Accounting Warden.
(Vestry minutes)

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[1] "Comparative Microscopic Analysis of the Exterior to Evaluate the Original Architectural Surface Coatings," prepared for Christ Church, Second Street Above Market, Philadelphia, PA., August 1978, by Frank S. Welsh, Historic Paint Color Consultant. [Collection of the Rev. F. Lee Richards]

1875

Sept. 22: Williams & McNichol, carpenters, paid $317.95 [part of the extensive 1875 renovations by Furness & Hewitt].
(Cash Book)

1920

June 8: Church exterior to be painted for $550, not including spire unless the money could be raised. [This seems like a very small cost for the entire building; possibly, the exterior was painted in stages through 1925 -- see below.]
(Vestry minutes)

1925

Dec. 15: Francis A. Lewis, a vestryman, reported that he had paid $875 of the $1,163 bill from S.W. Rudolph for painting the exterior of the church.
(Vestry minutes)

1944

Dec. 19: Extensive repairs and some replacement of the church cornice (cost $1,614); the minutes suggest that the carpenters believed they were replacing the original woodwork.
(Vestry minutes)

1956

Sept. 25: Vestry to hire roofer, W.H. Nester, 6110 West Oxford St., to repair some rotted sections of cornice and roof rafters.
(Vestry minutes)

1966

Exterior woodwork repainted
(Annual Parish Report)

1974

June 19: Repainted the church inside and out for $17,590.
(Vestry minutes)

1982

June 16: Vestry planning to paint the exterior; have received one quote for $13,000 (not including steeple).
(Vestry minutes)

Nov. 17: Megargee Brothers to paint exterior woodwork [bid for $13,465]; vestry expects to have steeple painted in 1983. [Parish has received $20,000 grant from Glenmeade Trust for repairs.]
(Vestry minutes)

BELL TOWER[1]

Designed by the architect William Strickland, the bell tower was added to the church in 1842 following the donation of a set of bells the same year. Initially, the vestry probably didn't intend to add the wooden steeple, probably because they felt constrained financially. The parish was in debt for nearly $3,000 and had already promised the congregation that pew rents would be reduced. Note that the decision to add the steeple on June 21, 1842 [see Steeple timeline for entry] was made only after the vestry had secured enough financing for the tower itself by June 14. See Chapter III for further background on Strickland and the context of the project.

1841

Dec. 29:

- Joseph R. Ingersoll, the rector's warden, called a special meeting of the vestry to announce that a former vestryman, Benjamin Chew Wilcocks, intended to donate a set of six chimes made by Thomas Mearns of Whitechapel, London [foundry for the Liberty Bell].[2]

- Vestry appointed the following committee of its own to oversee construction of the bell tower: Joseph R. Ingersoll, rector's warden; Francis Gurney Smith, accounting warden; Henry Flickwir, a builder; James Newbold, and Joseph Sims. Initially, the committee discussed whether to reverse the church plan, move the pulpit to the side, and locate the altar at the west end. [Unfortunately, their discussion or reasoning is unrecorded.]

(Vestry minutes)

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[1] NOTE: This timeline covers the brick tower only; for the wooden steeple, cross or bells, see those timelines below.

[2] When Benjamin Wilcocks announced the gift to his family on Christmas, among them was Joseph Ingersoll, an attorney and later Ambassador to Great Britain. Joseph was the brother of Charles Jared Ingersoll, a prominent attorney, author and congressman, who had married Wilcock's daughter. Wilcocks had served on the vestry in the late 18th century during Bishop White's tenure. Wilcocks' gift did occur spontaneously, but likely responded to the vestry's discussions, beginning in June 1841, to replace the old bells in the cupola. In a Sept. 14, 1841 meeting the vestry discussed three options: purchase either a set of chimes from Thomas Mears of London, a single bell from George Haley & Son, or a single bell from Louis Debose. The vestry seemed to be leaning toward the chimes, which they wanted to install in the cupola.

1842

Jan. 20: The vestry studied two plans and cost estimates presented by the architect William Strickland, but made no decision.
(Vestry minutes)

Feb. 10: Vestry votes to use Strickland's No. 2 drawing for the bell tower "provided [the project] doesn't exceed $4,000." [This drawing did not include the wooden spire -- see June 21, 1842 in the Steeple timeline.][3]

April 1: Sunday School room, built in 1820 on the site, is demolished. Tower construction begins immediately and is completed by the end of the year. [The vestryman D. Henry Flickwir, a builder, was apparently in charge of the project.]
(Vestry minutes)

April 5: Joseph R. Ingersoll, the rector's warden, loaned the parish $500 to help complete the tower.
(Vestry minutes)

June 14: Vestry borrowed $1,500 from Christ Church Hospital (at 6%) to finance the project; took out a second mortgage on the Sunday School building [319 Lombard St. -- now demolished], and called in a loan from the Schuylkill Navigation Co.
(Vestry minutes)

Sept. 13: Vestry's finance committee estimates the project cost at $7,500 [$3,500 more than the original limit set on Feb. 10]. Funding arranged to date included: $500 loan from Joseph R. Ingersoll; $1,500 loan from Christ Church Hospital; and $1,778 from the rector's ground rent fund [which the rector oversaw], leaving a balance of $3,722 to be raised through a 6% loan to be paid off as surplus funds accrued.[4] (Vestry minutes)

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[3] At this meeting, vestryman William Phillips protested the action, noting the parish's existing debt of $1,600 added to its outstanding $1,300 mortgage. The discussion to follow revealed the vestry's strategy to partially finance the construction through the sale of 10 unsold family burial vaults. Phillips also doubted whether the vestry could afford to reduce pew rents to their former rates as they had promised the congregation. Following the tower's completion, Phillips resigned in March 1843.

[4] In February 1843, Henry M. Mason, D.D., loaned the parish $1,000 for the tower and steeple.

Sept. 26: [survey by builder & vestryman Henry Flickwir]
- Tower Height: 110 ft; dimension: 24 ft, 6 inches square including corner buttresses.
- Wall Thickness: 2 feet, 2 inches between buttresses
- Battlemented Tower Roof: coped with marble; copper roof.
- Vestibules: 7 ft square with tin roof north and south sides; panelled doors with marble sills; tesselated marble floor.[5]
- First Floor [then Vestry room]: Interior folding doors with six-light (9x16) round top windows. Small doorway on south side with lined panel door and step ladder to second floor. Carolina heart-pine flooring over oak joists. Grecian ovolo moldings [perhaps chair rail] and plain casings. Stovepipe flue in NW corner. Stucco ceiling cornice and centre piece [in middle of ceiling].[6]
- Second Floor [choir vesting room today]: Door with window sash; Grecian ovolo [rail] molding with washboard [baseboard]. Carolina heart-pine flooring. Neatly plastered.
- Third Floor [identified as the ringing room]: Yellow-pine flooring. Roughly plastered.
- Fourth Floor: Rough white-pine grooved [tongue and groove] flooring; unplastered [also identified as a ringing room].
- Fifth Floor: Eight bells with massive wooden timber framing; two-part windows with rotating wooden louvers. Rough [presumably pine] flooring; unplastered.
- Sixth Floor: Circular two-part hinged windows. The base of the octagon-shaped wooden steeple rests here upon pinned-and-bolted wooden girders.
- Steeple: White-pine steeple posts measure 90 ft, 75 ft of which extend above tower roof. Posts bolted with braces and struts onto girders. Exterior sheathing: "best cedar shingles" with molded cedar-plank ribs, coped with large round cedar corona sheathed in copper.
- Cross and Ball: Copper ball diameter: 2 ft, 9 inches. Cross height: 6 ft, 6 inches. Cross piece: 4 ft, 6

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[5] The architect George Roberts believed that the existing door frames to the tower's vestibule entrances originally belonged to doorways that may have been later cut into the Sunday School-Vestry Room attached to the church in 1820, but there is no evidence to substantiate this theory. [see Appendix, p. 223 for view of room.]

[6] A special entranceway and ladder were built into the south side of the tower for the eight bell ringers so that they would not disturb worshippers as they entered the church. In her short unpublished article written for the parish in 1966, Pamela Rust noted that an old sign survived inside the ladderway reading: "No Persons Are Admitted To Steeple On Sunday But Ringers." [The tin sign remained in place in 1992 but had become unreadable.]

inches. Cross made of boards and planks covered with copper and gilded gold. Lighting rod points attached to rod.
(Franklin Fire Insurance Survey #4192 - HSP)

Dec. 13: The architect William Strickland, in a letter dated Nov. 22, presented his bill for $250 for "the tower and spire."
(Vestry minutes)

1843

Jan. 17: Vestry halted further ringing of the bells until the spire could be examined to uncover the cause of a vibration shaking the "spindle" which held the ball and cross.

March 14: The Building Committee reported that the construction and materials were sound, but that the mortar should be allowed a year's time to set or cure; ringing of the bells was halted for that period.
(Vestry minutes)

March 20: The Philadelphia Contributionship issues a perpetual fire insurance policy for the building for $9,000 (Policy No. 5829)
(INA Archives -- now CIGNA Corp.)

April 16: Building Committee's final report showed that the tower project (including bell framework) cost $9008.[7] All of the work, including demolition of the old Sunday School and vestry room, occurred without accident between April 1 and Dec. 31, 1842. [This entry also contains an itemized account of craftsmen, expenses and materials for the project.]
(Vestry minutes)

April 25: A parish library was organized by vestryman Henry Reed; its first location was the upper vestry room [now the choir vesting room on the second floor of the bell tower].
(Vestry minutes)

1845-46

June: Isaac Buffington paid for library book case for upper vestry room [today, the choir vesting room on the second floor].
(Cash book)

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[7] This amounted to $5,008 more than the original limit of $4,000 set before the wooden steeple was proposed, and $1,508 more than the revised budget seven months later after the steeple was included. Overall, the cost overrun between the first estimated budget with the steeple and the final figure came to 20 percent.

1847

June: Isaac Buffington paid for second book case made to match the one already constructed for the upper vestry room the year before [probably intended for the parish library; one of the cases may survive in the rector's office].
(Cash Book; Vestry minutes, April 18)

1848

Sept. 12: To raise the floor of the bell-ringing room [located in the third floor of the tower. This entailed the insertion of a wooden-frame subfloor or platform that stands three feet above the original floor.]
(Vestry minutes)

1852

May: Strattan & Bro. install gas lights in the bell-ringing room following a request by the bell ringers.[8]
(Cash Book)

1882

Magazine illustration shows an eight-rope wooden frame for ringing changes.[9] ("Our Continent," Phila., Oct.4, 1882)

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[8] Gas lighting had been introduced to the church in 1848, but not extended to the tower until this time; the vestry room was not lit until 1857. A special entranceway and ladder for the bell ringers was built into the south side of the tower so that they would not have to enter through the church. In a short article written for the parish in 1966, Pam Rust, a parishioner, noted that an old sign survived inside the ladderway reading: "No Persons Are Admitted To Steeple On Sunday But Ringers." [The tin sign remained in place in 1992 but had become unreadable.]

[9] Just when the traditional English method for change ringing was discontinued is unknown. Although no record has been found documenting how the English "chimes" actually operated, it is known that the bells originally swung freely and were probably rung by eight people, who stood in a circle, one to a bell rope; eight bell-rope holes arranged in a circle still survive in the ceiling above the bell-ringers' room. The switch to stationary bells struck by clappers may have occurred as early as 1848 in response to concerns over the tower's stability. In the new tower's first season, the vestry halted ringing for a year (March 1843-1844) until the mortar had fully cured and the structure settled somewhat. In 1848, the bell-ringing floor was raised three feet for reasons unknown, perhaps reflecting the transition to a stationary

1919

Dec. 9: To install electric lights for the bell ringers.
(Vestry minutes)

1929

April 3: To secure more room for the vestments, the [old library] bookcase in the upper vestry room [or choir vesting room] will be moved to St. Peter's House at 313 Pine St. and a vestment case built in the upper room.
(Vestry minutes)

1930

April 23: Vestment closets completed [in the choir vesting room].
(Vestry minutes)

1941

Dec. 17: Following the declaration of war, the vestry granted the city fire warden permission to use the tower as an observation point. [It is unknown whether the tower was ever used.]
(Vestry minutes)

1948

September - October: The inside brickwork was repointed in the upper rooms of the tower after having "deteriorated seriously"; the bells and old oaken beams that supported the bells were removed and steel beams were installed.[10]
(Vestry minutes)

1957

May 21: Sometime this spring, the roof on the tower below the spire was repaired for $1,1350.
(Vestry minutes)

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system.

[10] The thick wooden beams [12" x 16" x 4'] had rotted to almost 10 inches where they entered the wall. The minutes noted that the old lime mortar had disintegrated by this point. The two-month long project, supervised by Clifford Lewis Jr., a vestryman, cost $12,500 and was paid by an anonymous parish member [probably Mrs. Charles Fearon].

1963

The two uppermost sets of tower windows were repaired and painted by the carpenter Melvin H. Grebe.
(Parish Annual Report)

1966

The four louvered windows in the tower were rehabilitated and painted.
(Parish Annual Report)

The flue from the furnace in the boiler room to the tower parapet was replaced. The interior brickwork was repaired and repointed, and the exterior brickwork was cleaned, repointed, and waterproofed by William Watts, Inc. for $19,450.
(Vestry minutes)

1975

Sept. 17: Jack Hassler Co., steeplejacks, replaced the tower downspouts.
(Vestry minutes)

1981

April 29: A pigeon screen was installed in the belfry.
(Vestry minutes)

1984

May 23: Jack Hassler Co., steeplejacks, to repoint the tower brickwork for $3,200; work to begin by early July.
(Vestry minutes)

ST. PETER'S BELLS

Pre-1842 Cupola: On April 14, 1760, the vestry voted to donate "two old bells now in Christ Church" to St. Peter's for the cupola being constructed by Robert Smith [CC Vestry minutes; see Appendix, pp. 222-223 for two views of the structure.].[1] One bell was probably given to Christ Church between 1695-1702 while the other was acquired in 1712. The design of the cupola was rather generic, resembling many small cupolas on public buildings from the English Renaissance period.[2] Its design source may well have been the plate in William Adam's Vitruvius Scoticus for the Orphan Hospital (1734-36) in Edinburgh. Adam's book actually contains views of several cupolas that resemble St. Peter's. Charles Peterson believed that Smith carried copies

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[1] "...That there shall be a Cupola Erected and Compleately finished on the West End of the said Building of Ten feet Diameter and at least Thirty two feet high from the Top of the Roof to the Top of the Vane, that the said [Robert] Smith shall provide and fix thereon a large ball and vane composed of Copper and to be neatly Gilt..." [St. Peter's Building Contract, Aug. 5, 1758: CC Archives]

[2] While the cupola is long gone, a number of significant features predating the 1842 bell tower do survive, providing clues to its construction and part of the church's original interior. The pulpit and reading desk are attached to a wall that forms one side of a brick tower that once supported the cupola. The top of that tower still stands within the attic above the church's main ceiling. A thick oak beam that once acted as one of three sill plates to carry the cupola's heavy weight remains as do numerous other signs of the original framework. There is also a lower hidden space in the tower corresponding to the gallery level of the church. According to the original floor plan [see Appendix, p. 215.] this was the "bell room," but more likely the bell ringers' room. The wooden flooring above this space (corresponding to the attic level) still contains two reinforced holes clearly designed for bell ropes. The "bell room" appears to have been whitewashed once, suggesting that it was a very bright space, especially since the middle window in the west wall at the gallery level opened onto it [see Appendix, p. 223]. That window opening, bricked shut since 1842, is clearly visible within the space. Other indicators within suggest that the present staircase to the pulpit and choir vesting room (second floor of the 1842 tower) was added in 1842, radically changing the spatial character within the old tower -- note, for example, that the ground-level space behind the reading desk once contained the vestry room, according to the old floor plan.

of the plates when he emigrated from Scotland in the 1740s.[3]

In October 1777, as the British army approached Philadelphia, the two bells in the cupola were taken down despite the Rev. Jacob Duché's protests and moved to Allentown, where they were hidden for almost a year under the floor of Zion Reformed Church along with the Liberty Bell and those from Christ Church. After the British left Philadelphia, the bells were restored in their respective towers. Little was recorded of the cupola's maintenance -- in 1836, for example, the Vestry minutes noted only that the ball and weathervane had been regilded.

1842 Mearns Chimes (present set): On June 8, 1841, the first mention appeared of the vestry's desire for new bells. A series of ad hoc committee meetings followed -- on September 14, for example, the vestry was considering three options: the purchase of a set of chimes from Thomas Mearns of London; the purchase of a single bell from George Haley & Son; or a single bell from Louis Debose. The matter had stalled by October, although Joseph Ingersoll, the rector's warden, was probably working behind the scenes to persuade his relative, Benjamin Chew Wilcocks, a well-to-do attorney and retired vestryman, to donate a new set of bells. On Christmas Day, Wilcocks announced his intention to purchase six chimes [later increased to eight] from Thomas Mearns Foundry of London, the same foundry that had cast the Liberty Bell.[4] By April 1842, the cupola had been

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[3] Peterson also assumed that the cupola built by Smith for Nassau Hall (1754-56) at Princeton University was taken from that same collection. However, the present tower on Nassau Hall was added in the mid-19th century following a fire. [Peterson, Robert Smith, Philadelphia Builder-Architect, p. 293.]

[4] Each of the eight bells currently in the tower contain the following cast inscription:

Thomas Mearns Founder London
Presented to St. Peter's Church Philadelphia
By
Benjamin C. Wilcocks, Esq. A.D. 1842

The largest stands 4 ft. high and measures 4 ft. in diameter, comparing closely in size to the Liberty Bell; the smallest measures 2 ft. across. The set of eight, tuned to the diatonic scale, were cast for English-style "change" ringing which had become popular in the 17th century. Eight ringers would stand in a circle, one to a bell rope, and ring the bells in various prescribed orders, never repeating the order. As the parishioner Pamela Rust wrote in her brief unpublished 1966 article for St. Peter's: "Each bell is attached to wooden wheels, over which ropes

dismantled along with the Sunday School room that had stood on the tower site. [While the cupola was taken down, the masonry structure that supported it survives today as the stairtower to the pulpit and bell tower.] [5]

The two cupola bells originally donated in 1760 by Christ Church were lent out: In 1842, St. Peter's Church, Uniontown (Fayette County), borrowed one, and the Church of the Nativity on Spring Garden Street borrowed the other in 1845. Eventually, Christ Church reclaimed both: the Nativity returned the 1712 bell to Christ Church Hospital (now the Kearsley Home) in 1876, where it remains today. In 1877, Christ Church requested that St. Peter's, Uniontown, return the ca. 1695-1702 bell for its chapel that was being completed at the time on Pine Street near 20th St. That chapel, designed by Joseph P. Sims, still stands today as a Christian Scientist Church.

1843

Jan. 17: Vestry halted further ringing of the bells until the spire could be examined to uncover the cause of the vibration shaking the "spindle" which held the ball and cross.
(Vestry minutes)

March 14: The Building Committee reported that the construction and materials were sound, but that the mortar should be allowed a year's time to set or cure, and so bell ringing should be halted for that period.
(Vestry minutes)

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are passed, allowing the bell to swing, sometimes in full circle. The bell is sounded by a clapper which swings freely and strikes within. To the person who is not familiar with the art of change ringing, it can be a monotonous jangle and a nuisance because no melody exists. The ringers find satisfaction in mathematical completeness and mechanical perfection." [Eight bell-rope holes arranged in a circle exist currently in the ceiling above the bell-ringers' third-floor room.]

[5] In August, the vestry ordered the cupola's weathervane and ball sold for at least $50; a year later, the April 25 minutes noted that the weathervane and ball had been re-installed on the Parish and Sunday School building. Completed in 1839, this rowhouse-like building stood at 319 Lombard St. [#79 old number system] until 1873 when it was demolished as part of the site for the new church school building [now the oldest section of St. Peter's School complex]. Whatever became of the ball and vane during these changes is unknown.

March 15: American Fire Insurance Co. issued policy #16186 on new bells for $1,500 for 10 years.
(Vestry minutes)

1848

Sept. 12: Vestry decided to raise the floor of the bell-ringing room.[6]
(Vestry minutes)

1852

May: Strattan & Bro. installed gas lights in the bell-ringing room following a request by the bell ringers.[7]
(Cash Book)

1882

Magazine illustration shows an eight-rope wooden frame for ringing changes.
("Our Continent," v. II, n. 13, Phila., 10/4/1882)

1919

Dec. 9: To install electric lights for the bell ringers.
(Vestry minutes)

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[6] This entailed the insertion of a wooden-frame subfloor or platform that stands three feet above the older third floor. The alteration followed the resignation of Thomas Lesage, the chief bell ringer who had been hired in 1843. In 1847, Lesage and his assistants had struck for higher wages, refusing to work on Sundays unless paid an extra $30 for ringing for public occasions. The vestry refused their demand. This may have been an ongoing source of problems; the cacophony [to some ears] of change ringing may have also become unpopular in the neighborhood. As early as this year, the vestry may have opted to abandon the traditional change system and convert the bells to a stationary system that could be operated by one person if necessary. Raising the floor may relate to this conversion, which certainly existed by 1888 [see 1888 entry].

[7] Gas lighting had been introduced to the church in 1848, but not extended to the tower until this time; the vestry room was not lit until 1857. This entry suggests that the parish had hired a new crop of ringers, although by then the traditional English change ringing method, used in the 1840s before wage problems with the ringers, may have been replaced with a bell-ringing stand as exists currently.

1948

September-October: The bells were removed temporarily after the original oak beams that had supported them were found to have "deteriorated seriously" -- the thick beams [12" x 16" x 4'] had rotted to almost 10 inches where they entered the brick wall of the tower. Steel beams were installed in their place. The two-month long project, supervised by the vestryman Clifford Lewis Jr., cost $12,500.
(Vestry minutes)

1952

May 27: Clifford Lewis recommended giving the wooden timbers that originally held the bells [removed in 1948] to the Philadelphia Museum of Art. The timbers had been stored in John Barber's Cabinet Shop on Chancellor Street. [It's unknown whether that donation ever occurred.]
(Vestry minutes)

1958

Oct. 28: Vestry decided to have the bells played again on Sundays. [Apparently, they hadn't been rung on a regular basis in some time.]
(Vestry minutes)

1960

The bell ringing system was modernized with nylon ball-bearing pulleys replacing many of the earlier (and noisy) metallic pulleys. Nylon line replaced the older hemp rope, which was hard on the ringer's hands. An eight bell ringer's stand was installed two floor levels below the bells (rather than one).
(Rust's history)

1966

At the time, holes for the bell ropes remained in the ceiling of the second floor. Originally, change ringing had been done from the second floor of the tower, where the organ blower was located; in 1960, a bell ringer's frame was moved to the third floor.
(Rust's history)

1992

The "Do" bell rope [for tolling] extends down to the ground floor of the stairhall to the pulpit (behind the reading desk).

The gold gilt cross, which stands 10 feet high at the top of the spire, is supposed to have been the first cross placed on an Episcopal church steeple in the United States. However, the distinction appears to be more legend that fact. In 1822, Immanuel Episcopal Church in New Castle, Del., erected a "beautifully gilt cross, ball and vane" on its new spire designed by William Strickland.[1] The decision to place a cross on the spire reflected the Anglo-Catholic leanings of the vestry and the rector, the Rev. William Odenheimer. With the rise of the Anglo-Catholic movement from the late 1830s, crosses began to replace the traditional 18th century weathervane as the "outward emblem" of the Church [DeMille, p. 22]. As an emblem, the cross was not universally admired, especially by Low Church Episcopalians who considered it a "popish" display.[2]

1842

June 14: Vestry began to debate whether to top the spire with a ball and cross [versus a weathervane in the 18th c. Anglican tradition].
(Vestry minutes)

Aug. 26: Vestrymen John Welsh, Jr. and John Donaldson object to the cross and ball despite their support at the last meeting. A second vote is postponed.
(Vestry minutes)

Sept. 5: The following vestry members voted to reconsider: William Phillips, Isaac Roach, John Welsh, James Newbold, D. Henry Flickwir, and Francis G. Smith. All others, including

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[1] Immanuel Church Record Book, v. 1, 1822. (Quoted in Gilchrist's "Additions to William Strickland: Architect and Engineer." Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians, (October 1954), p. 7.

[2] In his newspaper account of Philadelphia's churches in the 1850s, Dr. John Kearsley Mitchell, a parishioner and father of the novelist S. Weir Mitchell, wrote: "in the days of early simplicity, however much the forms and ceremonies of the church were objected to by outsiders, they saw no gilded projection far above the steeple in the form of a cross. The entire exterior of all the original churches was perfectly plain and simple.... Then too, no minister of the Episcopal Church could have been mistaken for a Catholic priest by the long sweep of his black coat and its fastening up to the chin, as if in imitation of the popish brotherhood." [Westcott's Scrapbooks, v. 4, 1854-55 - HSP.]

the rector, the Rev. William Odenheimer, supported the cross. Eventually, a tie-breaking vote by Odenheimer approved the cross.
(Vestry minutes)

1856

June 2: Cross and ball regilt for the first time and the steeple repainted.
(Vestry minutes)

1891

June 24: Cross regilt and steeple painted for no more than $350. [The cross may have been regilt in 1869, the last recorded date for the steeple being repainted.]
(Vestry minutes)

1930

June 10: Cross regilt along and spire repainted for $1,663; also installed new lightning rods and king posts (to hold the cross in place).
(Vestry minutes)

1947

June 10: Cross and ball cleaned as part of the steeple's repainting this summer by East Coast Steeplejack Co, 6201 Christian St.
(Vestry minutes)

1953

June 16: To repair weakened king-post anchoring for cross and ball.
(Vestry minutes)

1963

June: Jack Hassler Co. [est. 1900, 1619 W. Thompson St.] to regild cross with 24 carat pale gold leaf and repaint steeple with Finneran and Haley's "Seashore White" for $2,190.
(St. Peter's parish records)

1964

August: The original 1842 cross replaced and steeple repainted after an inspection by Jack Hassler Co. revealed that the cross had been damaged from lightning strikes. [By then, maintaining spire on a three-year cycle.]
(St. Peter's parish records)

1975

June 18: Vestry accepts bid of Jack Hassler Co. to repair the cross's king-post mounting [cross is turning in the wind], repaint steeple, tighten the structure's turnbuckle braces, and repair the lighting rods. (Vestry minutes)

1977

May 18: Recent high winds had loosened the king post holding the cross and twisted its position. Jack Hassler & Co. will replace the rotting post and rusted supporting bolts, and repaint the steeple; work to begin in September. [Bid was $12,000, but bill came to $14,165.]
(Vestry minutes)

1987

March 24: Vestry estimates that regilding the cross would cost $13,500, but no action taken.
(Vestry minutes)

WOODEN STEEPLE

Designed as an addition to the tower by the architect William Strickland only weeks after his design of the tower in January 1842, the steeple was approved only after the vestry had secured enough financing to go ahead with the tower. Initially, the vestry probably didn't intend to build the steeple, probably because they couldn't afford it. The parish was in debt for nearly $3,000 and had already promised the congregation that pew rents would be reduced. But once the vestry had lined up enough money to build the brick tower, they may have received pledges from other parishioners such as Dr. Henry M. Mason, who loaned them $1,000, to go ahead with the steeple as well.

1842

Feb. 10: Vestry chooses architect William Strickland's No. 2 design for the bell tower "provided [the project] doesn't exceed $4,000." [This scheme did not include a wooden spire -- see June 21.]
(Vestry minutes)

February: William Strickland was paid $20 for two plans for the "turret" [the wooden spire].
(Cash Book)

June 21: Following the recommendation of the vestry's "Committee on the Turret," the vestry voted unanimously to add a wooden spire to the bell tower. [One of two designs William Strickland had been paid for in February.] [1]
(Vestry minutes)

Aug. 17: Francis Gurney Smith, the accounting warden, moved to revise Strickland's design of the "turret" [spire], calling for 16 circular windows.
(Vestry minutes)

1843

Jan. 17: Vestry halted further ringing of the bells until the steeple could be examined to uncover the cause of the vibration shaking the "spindle" [the iron rod that secured the ball and cross].
(Vestry minutes)

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[1] Through the rest of the summer, the vestry debated whether to top the spire with a weathervane, in the 18th century Anglican practice, or with a ball and cross in the increasingly popular Anglo-Catholic style influenced by the Oxford Movement.

1845

April 1: A design by William Strickland "for the improvement of the architectural appearance of the steeple was submitted for consideration." Henry Flickwir [a vestryman and the builder who constructed tower] "was authorized to have a pattern constructed and erected for inspection of the vestry" [but nothing more came of the plan, and it is unknown what the design entailed.]
(Vestry minutes)

1848

April 18: Steeple painted.
(Vestry minutes)

1856

June 2: Steeple painted [last time eight years ago]; steeple ball and cross regilt.
(Vestry minutes)

1869

May 25: Vestry committee appointed to oversee painting of steeple.
(Vestry minutes)

1891

June 24: Vestry moves to have steeple painted and cross regilt for no more than $350.
(Vestry minutes)

1892

Oct. 19: Vestry approves "necessary repairs" to the steeple. [No details of the repairs.]
(Vestry minutes)

1930

June 10: Steeple painted and cross regilt for $1,663; new lightning rods and king posts installed.
(Vestry minutes)

1947

June 10: Steeple and church roof repaired and repainted this summer by East Coast Steeplejack Co, 6201 Christian St. Phila.
(Vestry minutes)

1950

Aug. 29: Wood-Stretch Co. hired to paint steeple.
(Vestry minutes)

1958

Jan. 28: Vestry approves illumination of the steeple pending funding.[2]
(Vestry minutes)

Nov. 18: This evening the Rev. Joseph Koci inaugurated the new spire lighting; beginning on Dec. 7, the spire would be illuminated every evening until 1 a.m.
(Vestry minutes)

1959

May 26: Steeple being repainted.
(Vestry minutes)

1963

June: Jack Hassler Co. to paint steeple with Finneran and Haley's "Seashore White."
(St. Peter's parish records)

1964

August: The steeple was being repainted after the original cross was replaced following an inspection by Jack Hassler Co. that revealed the 1842 cross had been charred seriously by lightning. [By this time, the structure was being maintained on a three-year cycle.]
(St Peter's parish records)

1965

The steeple has been "completely restored." [Entry doesn't specify what work occurred but may refer to repairs noted August 1964.] (Annual Parish Report)

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[2] The idea was first suggested by the rector, the Rev. Joseph Koci, and later supported by the vestry's Redevelopment Committee: Raymond A. Ballinger, chair; Joseph T. Fraser Jr., William R. Talbot, and Dr. F. William Sunderman; by Oct. 28, they had a plan that cost $300 for four lights with a timer. The parishioner and vestryman Lawrence M.C. Smith underwrote the cost.

1975

June 18: Vestry accepts bid of Jack Hassler Co. to repaint steeple, tighten the turnbuckles on steeple braces, repair the cross's mounting (cross is turning in the wind) and repair lighting rods.
(Vestry minutes)

1984

May 23: Jack Hassler Co. to paint steeple for $8,974; work to begin early July.
(Vestry minutes)

VESTRY ROOM

The vestry has met in various places throughout the parish's history. Early on, when St. Peter's was part of Christ Church, the two congregations shared the same vestry and rector. For some time through the late 18th century, the vestry probably met either in the rector's house (Bishop White's) at 309 Walnut Street or the vestry room in the ground floor of the old bell tower [see original floor plan: Appendix, p. 215.] or in various vestrymen's homes.[1] In late 1820 or early 1821, the vestry began meeting in a one-story, one-room building attached to the church on the future site of the bell tower [see view in Appendix, p. 223]. The building had initially been requested by the Female Sunday School Society, which had been holding classes since 1816 in a large pew in the nave, but the vestry presumably welcomed the idea as it had need for meeting space itself.[2] After 1832, when the Sunday School classes moved into a rowhouse on Lombard St., the vestry inherited the room all for itself. The little building was demolished in 1842 and replaced by the large bell tower in which the first-floor room became the new vestry meeting place. Sometime in the late 1920s, possibly after the church was given 313 Pine Street as the new home for St. Peter's House, the vestry probably began meeting here and the tower room was converted for Sunday nursery care. In 1959, just after the arrival of the Rev. Joseph Koci, the old vestry room was converted back to its former use. However, by 1970 or soon after the arrival of the Rev. F. Lee Richards that year, the vestry began meeting again in the first floor of 313 Pine St. where it meets presently.

1820

Sept. 14: William Strickland wrote to John Miller with a proposal for a "Sunday School room" to be built on the west

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[1] The pulpit and reading desk are attached to a wall that forms one side of a brick tower that once supported a bell cupola before 1842 [see Appendix, p. 222.]. Prior to the present large tower, the spatial configuration within the small inner tower was dramatically different. The vestry met within the ground-floor space just behind the reading desk. The room was likely much lower and open, probably containing a small winder staircase in one corner that led to the pulpit. The present open staircase was likely not added until 1842. Above this small meeting room, at approximately the pulpit level, was the bell ringers' room where two ropes hung for the bells in the cupola.

[2] Bishop Delancey's 1861 parish centennial sermon.

end of the church "completely finished for $700."[3]
(Strickland letter: CC Archives)

1839

Nov. 9: While the vestry room was being painted and refurbished, the Accounting Warden was authorized $30 to purchase Bishop Delancey's clock for the room. [DeLancey, the former rector, had left, having been made Bishop of Western New York in May.]
(Vestry minutes)

1840

March: Abraham McDonough [chairmaker] paid for 12 chairs, [presumably for vestry room].
(Cash Book)

1842

Sept. 26 [survey for new vestry room in ground floor of bell tower]: Interior folding doors with six-light (9x16) round-top windows. Small doorway on south side with lined panel door and step ladder to second floor. Carolina heart-pine flooring over oak joists. Grecian ovolo moldings [perhaps chair rail] and plain casings. Stovepipe flue in northwest corner.[4] Stucco ceiling cornice and centre piece [in middle of the ceiling -- intended for gas fixture].
(Franklin Fire Insurance Survey #4192 - HSP)

1857

October: Strattan & Bro. paid for installing gas lights in the vestry room. [The church proper had been equipped with gas lighting in 1848.]
(Cash book)

1865

Sept. 12: Vestry approved new carpet for its room.
(Vestry minutes)

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[3] The letter read in part: "The dimensions are marked on the plan and exhibit all the space that can be appropriated to that object without obstructing the light of the two windows on each side of the vestry room."

[4] Note that this flue for the stove is now used as the stack for the church's central boiler in the cellar beneath the tower.

1871

June 13: Vestry gave the "old clock" in the vestry room to John Barnard, the retiring sexton. [Unknown whether this was Bishop DeLancey's clock purchased in 1839]
(Vestry minutes)

In the 1870s, a portrait of the Rev. Jacob Duché wearing a wig hung in the vestryroom.
(Watson's Annals of Philadelphia, v. 3)

1915

Dec. 11: To recarpet the vestry room.
(Vestry minutes)

1917

March: New wooden floor laid in the vestry room and entry.
(1927 Parish Yearbook)

1926

Cork flooring was installed over the wooden floor laid in 1917; said to be "more sanitary and to prevent dust from the [coal] furnace sifting through." [Possibly used as a nursery room during this period.]
(1927 Parish Yearbook)

1930

April 23: The room and hallway have been painted.
(Vestry minutes)

1949

Jan. 24: To have the room and north and south entrance vestibules repainted.
(Vestry minutes)

1959

Nov. 24: To restore the vestry room as originally arranged. [The conversion occurred from June to November 1960; the room may have been used as a nursery prior to this.]
(Vestry minutes)

1967

The rope for the "Do" bell in the tower still ran down into the vestry room. (Parish Annual Report)

1974

Installed chair rail in the former vestry room, then being used for choir practice. [Vestry began meeting in the first floor of St. Peter's House, 313 Pine St., soon after the arrival of the Rev. F. Lee Richards in 1970.]
(Vestry minutes)

1986

Aug. 13: Former vestry room in the tower has been converted into a nursery space and renamed the Bishop's Room.
(Vestry minutes)

BIER SHED

The one-story former bier shed or casket holding building in the southwest corner of the church yard may date from 1765, but more likely was replaced or constructed in 1890. Its chronology is somewhat uncertain given that the vestry requested a new "tool house" to be built in 1890 and did not specifically mention the "bier house." However, there is no record of another separate tool house, and since this little brick building was used to store tools from at least the 1960s, presumably it was being used in the same fashion in 1890. What the original building looked like and what material it was constructed of is also unknown. The building is still used to store equipment and tools for maintenance of the church yard.

1765

March: "It being represented that it is necessary to have a shed built for keeping the bier belonging to St. Peter's Church and the spades and other utensils necessary for the grave digger, it is resolved that a shed should be erected in some convenient place for that purpose in as cheap and commodious a manner as may be, and Mr. Charles Stedman is appointed to superintend this work."
(CC Vestry minutes)

1890

Oct. 7: Vestry committee authorized to build a new tool house [presumably the bier shed] for not more than $300.
(Vestry minutes)

1922

June 13: Bier shed to be repaired for $150.
(Vestry minutes)

1953

June 16: Vestry to repair roof of bier shed. [Like most entries concerning the church property, this entry doesn't specify why or what part.]
(Vestry minutes)

1980

June 18: Vestry to take bids for repair of the bier shed wall. [Presumably the south wall since they want to share the cost with St. Peter's School.]
(Vestry minutes)

CHURCH GATES

No direct record was found to document the age or creator of the wrought-iron gates. It can be assumed with some certainty, however, that they were designed and built in 1784 during construction of the church yard wall.[1] Presumably, Samuel Wheeler or his partner, the vestryman Robert Towers, who made the iron palisade that year along the Third Street wall, also crafted the gates.[2] The gates were reconstructed or replicated in large measure in 1835 by Jacob Rambo who was instructed to re-use as much of the original iron as possible. According to the parish records, the gates were last repaired in 1904, however like much of the maintenance history of the church, the accuracy of that date is uncertain given the historical propensity of the building committee chairmen to maintain their own records. According to Ruth O'Brien, former building committee chair, the gates were last repaired in the late 1980s.

1784

June 28: Contract signed with John Parker and William Gray to build brick wall around St. Peter's yard. Contract reads in part: "No deductions to be made for gateways, nor any addition for piers.... Shall have the liberty to erect a palisade iron fence in front of St. Peter's church with gates on each end thereof."
(Contract: CC Archives)

Nov. 23-29: Samuel Wheeler and Robert Towers [a vestrymen] paid £35 "for making palisades for St. Peter's Church wall."
(CC Accounting Warden)

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[1] Prior to that time, the gates were probably wooden affairs that accompanied a board fence around the yard. On May 30, 1764, for example, the vestry paid £5 for two locks for gates to the yard [CC Cashbook].

[2] Wheeler was a master blacksmith who made the balcony for Congress Hall in 1786, and the iron picket fence and gate on Second Street to Old Christ Church in c. 1795-97. Wheeler is also reputed to have made canon for Washington's army at the Battle of Brandywine, and the iron chain that Washington stretched across the Hudson River above West Point to prevent the British from invading New York. [The Evening Bulletin, Feb. 6, 1922.]

1835

April 28: Vestry authorizes construction of new gates for Third and Pine Street entrances by Jacob Rambo, using as much of the old material as possible. [Rambo listed himself as a "plater" at Bedford and Union Sts.]
(Vestry minutes)

July 10: New iron gates by Jacob Rambo hung at Third Street entrance; Pine Street gate hung on Sept 3.[3]
(Smith diary; Cash Book)

1875

Dec. 11:
- J.W. Forsyth paid for repairing gates at Third Street.
- Arthur McArdle paid $25 for repairing four of the yard gates. [Ironworker, 511 Bainbridge St.]
(Cash Book)

1904

Nov. 25: Vestry to have gates repaired.
(Vestry minutes)

[3] The order of completion and installation is further evidence that Third Street continued to function as the primary entrance side into the early 19th century.

GRAVES AND VAULTS

Unfortunately, the vestry minutes contain few if any references to gravestones in the church yard. The earliest recorded discussions of the vestry focused on construction of the family vaults at the northeast corner of the yard in the 1830s. Dates for interments were entered in the Parish Register, but the locations were not specified and can only be surmised where a family plot existed. Luckily, in 1868 the Rev. William White Bronson, then an assistant minister, began transcribing the tombstone inscriptions at the suggestion of the Rev. Thomas F. Davies who had become rector that year. Ten years later, Bronson's work was published privately in a volume entitled Inscriptions in St. Peter's Church Yard (in the parish collection). Bronson also drew up a plan of the yard kept by the parish.

Maintenance of the graves has presented a continual if seemingly futile challenge given the fragile nature of the largely marble stones. Where industrial pollution from the 19th and early 20th centuries contained its own poisons, acid rain later in this century has probably wreaked as much if not more damage. Even as early as 1868, when the Rev. Bronson began his labor, many of the earliest tombstones had become practically unreadable. Today, that condition is true for most of the marble no matter its vintage. Of course, spalling and corrosion have in some cases been the least of the grave stones' worries: vandalism has also been a continuous problem.[1]

The burial yard was closed to casket burials in 1966 since the grounds were judged to be fully occupied. Although a few reserved plots for caskets remained open, new burials beyond those reserved were allowed only for urns in a special section created that year along the north side of the church bordering the Pine Street entrance walk.

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[1] As early as 1850, the vestry minutes note that local boys, perhaps from the church school, had done damage in the yard, probably by knocking over stones. In 1896, the minutes note again that a family gravestone had been broken by school boys. Probably the worst case to date occurred in March 1992 when unknown persons came over the church wall overnight and smashed over 80 stones, many broken repeatedly into small fragments. Among those badly damaged was the well-known memorial to the famous organist-composer-music publisher Benjamin Carr that stands just west of the bell tower. Designed in the early 19th century by the architect William Strickland, the memorial was contributed by the Musical Fund Society of which Carr was a founding member.

1833

April 16: Since the burial ground was "rapidly filling up," the vestry appointed a committee to make new plan for improvements and apportioning of vaults and grounds [see 1834].
(Vestry minutes)

1834

June 27: Vestry approved a plan to construct more family vaults [probably at the northeast corner of the yard. Jacob Rambo, an ironworker, has been hired to build iron posts and chains along the walkways between Third Street gates and the church.]
(Vestry minutes)

1835

May 13: Although a vestry committee has found room for 60 spaces in the vaults, it recommended construction of only 25 family vaults near Pine Street gate where some already existed. The price would be $300 for parishioners and $350 for outsiders. The vaults would consist of brick-lined walls with marble slabs, and would measure 7 ft. x 5 ft. x 18 ft. deep. Estimated $115 to 120 to build each.
(Vestry minutes)

May 25: Workmen began excavation for new Pine Street vaults.
(Smith diary)

1838

December: John Struthers paid for making vaults. [marble mason at 360 High (Market) St.]
(Cash Book)

1842

February: 10 family burial vaults remained unsold.[2]
(Vestry minutes)

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[2] The revenue from their eventual sale was anticipated at the time as one source of funding to help pay for the new bell tower.

1850

April 9: "The Warden represented to the Vestry the serious injury sustained by the yard from the depredations of unruly boys and asked for some suggestions to aid him in preventing it." [Presumably, the boys had been knocking down gravestones.]
(Vestry minutes)

1896

Oct. 20: A Mrs. Lindsey has written to the vestry complaining that children from St. Peter's School had broken a family gravestone.
(Vestry minutes)

1899

March 14: A.J. Dallas Dixon requested that a marble slab be set against the east wall over the gravestone of the Dallas family. [Note: while approved, the vestry reserved the right to remove the stone in case of future alterations to the building.]
(Vestry minutes)

1900

June 12: Vestry heard progress report on a plan to upgrade the church yard; it noted that all grave mounds are to be leveled off.
(Vestry minutes)

1901

June 11: A Miss Keating [presumably from the George Wharton Public School] requested that an iron fence be erected on the south side of yard between the school to protect the graves; the vestry refused and suggested a privet hedge instead.
(Vestry minutes)

1919

Nov. 5: Yard space for burial plots now so limited that vestry restricted graves to be sold only to parishioners.
(Vestry minutes)

1966

By this year no room remained for casket burials.
(Parish Annual Report)

1983

Sept. 21: As part of 1982-83 restoration program, the vestry estimated paying $800 to the DeChristopher Brothers for tombstone stabilization.
(Vestry minutes)

1985

May 15: Vestry to commission a feasibility study for a new rectory at the west end of the graveyard from the architectural firm of Venturi, Rauch and Scott Brown [but nothing came of the action].
(Vestry minutes)

GRAVE YARD

The land that the church building stands on was acquired by the vestry of Christ Church in 1757, just one year before construction began. The vestry had been asking to buy the land for three years from the sons of William Penn, who had inherited the mantle of "Proprietors of Pennsylvania" from their father.[1] This lot, which originally had been intended for the German Company, had probably once been the site of a duck pond or wetland that drained into Dock Creek early in the 1700s. If so, it would explain the sporadic bouts of dampness the church has contended with over the years: in 1856, for example, a well was dug on the south side of the yard to correct drainage problems; in 1967, the mortar in the east-side watertable and foundation was repointed to offset moisture in the wall that was causing plaster to peel near the altar. It was also probably no accident that the earliest trees planted in the yard -- Weeping Willows, Sycamores and Lombardy Poplars -- were species that loved damp soil conditions. The original burial ground consisted of two lots acquired in 1758 [see Conveyance Plan in Appendix, p. 214]. The northwest quadrant of the present yard, which originally had been subdivided by the Penns for 11 house lots, was acquired 24 years later in 1782.[2] During one brief period from about 1965 to 1969, St. Peter's parish owned and controlled the entire city block from Third to Fourth Streets and from Pine to Lombard Streets. In 1969, however, St. Peter's School became independent of the parish and assumed control of its building on Lombard Street adjacent to the church yard. In 1974, the church transferred ownership of a cleared lot at

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[1] There had obviously been footdragging by the Proprietors that was probably symptomatic of an underlying friction between the Vestry and the Penns, and probably reflecting a larger friction between Quakers and Anglicans for power in Philadelphia. As late as 1765, the Rev. Richard Peters was still defending the Penns' commitment to the Anglican Church in a letter to the vestry from London regarding his attempts to obtaining a corporate charter for the parish. The Penn family, who had converted from Quakerism to Anglicanism by this point, was regarded as less than wholly ingenuous by some Churchmen.

[2] These parcels had been owned by the Penn Proprietorship but were conveyed to St. Peter's after the new state government succeeded the Penn corporation as the public holder of lands originally granted to William Penn by the King of England.

Fourth and Lombard to the school for a playground.[3] Presently, the church retains ownership of the parking lot at Third and Lombard also used by the school as a playground.

1754

Aug. 1: Christ Church vestry petitioned Thomas and Richard Penn, the Proprietors of Pennsylvania [and sons of William Penn], for a lot on the west side of Third Street, extending 102 ft south on Third Street. [see Penn Papers, v. VII, p. 109; part of larger holding from Second to Fourth Street.]
(Roberts history)

1757

May 2: After three years of inaction, the Penns granted the lot to Christ Church through its rector, the Rev. Jacob Duché. Measuring 178 x 102 ft. at Third and Pine Streets., the lot was originally intended for "the German Company."
(Lewis plan)

1758

June 27: Vestry decided to approach George Fudge and Gunning Bedford, who owned the two adjoining Third Street properties to the south, in order to buy their lots. [The two men did not sell and the church did not acquire the properties until 1940.]
(CC Vestry minutes)

July 28: Vestry purchased two lots for a burial ground from Charles Edgar for £360: (1) 62 x 396 ft., extended from Third to Fourth Streets, south of the church lot; and (2) 198 x 40 ft., fronting on Fourth Street, south of the first lot.
(Lewis plan; Jefferys, Pa. Mag., v. 47, p. 347)

1768

Oct. 21: Vestry paid for hauling gravel to St. Peter's on this date and April 15, 1769; perhaps for filling marshy ground, or perhaps building walkways.
(CC Accounting Warden)

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[3] This cleared lot had been the site previous to the early 1960s of five rowhouses -- #423 to 431-- that fronted on Fourth Street.

1769

May 3: The rector, the Rev. Jacob Duché, transferred three lots to St. Peter's [see Conveyance Plan, Appendix, p. 214]. This transfer completed the deal between the Penn Proprietors and Charles Edgar for the building site and much of the present yard.
(Lewis plan)

1770

Nov. 3: John Power paid for "paving the church lots."
(CC Accounting Warden)

1782

April 8: Vestry purchased lot adjoining burying ground for £82,10s.
(CC Vestry minutes)

April 12: David Rittenhouse paid £20 for a "lot of ground adjoining to St. Peter's burying ground in state money."
(CC Accounting warden)

Oct. 9: Hayms Solomon and David Rittenhouse paid commission for helping to obtain state money for additional church yard lots [see Oct. 14].
(CC Accounting warden)

Oct. 14: Vestry purchased 11 house lots for £82,10s from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania on the south side of Pine Street [totally 218 x 102 ft.].
(Lewis plan)

1783

October: Alex Miller paid for carting 14 loads of gravel to St. Peter's yard.
(CC Accounting Warden - entry May 27, 1784)

1836

July 26: Vestry authorized the accounting warden to introduce piped river water into church yard [probably Schuylkill River water from the municipal waterworks].
(Vestry minutes)

1856

April 17: Samuel Price hired to dig a well on the south side of the church for not more than $50; expected to correct drainage problem.
(Vestry minutes)

1891

March 10: Vestry authorized the design of a ground plan for the church yard.
(Vestry minutes)

1898

April 13: A plan of improvements to be made for the grounds [for more information, see minutes: June 1, 1899].
(Vestry minutes)

1900

June 12: Vestry heard progress report on $1,000 plan to improve church yard, some of whose goals had already been met. Still to come, for example, all grave mounds were to be leveled off.
(Vestry minutes)

1916

Dec. 12: Flagpole given by vestryman Francis A. Lewis. Vestry initially approved its erection on the parish house roof on Lombard St. On March 13, 1917, the site was changed to the church yard, perhaps because of reasons tied to the First World War.
(Vestry minutes)

1950

June 16: In a letter from George Roberts to the carpenter William Wallace, Roberts indicated that he had designed the classically detailed wooden sign just inside the Pine Street gate.
(Collection of F. Lee Richards)

1976

Feb. 25: Vestry authorized new exterior signs for the church [in preparation for the Bicentennial celebration that summer].
(Vestry minutes)

CHURCHYARD TREES AND PLANTS

A casual tour of the churchyard reveals the decorative but seemingly random nature of the plantings. This may have been intentional or it may represent the cumulative effect of various individual efforts over many years. The vestry minutes and other parish records offer only a sketchy sense of how this varied landscape came to be. The row of Sycamores lining the north and west walls can be traced to 1838-1841. The Sycamore was introduced to the yard at least as early as 1770, probably replacing the Lombardy Poplar and Weeping Willow as the predominant specimens in the yard.

1766

Dec. 11-13: Philip Schuyler and Prime Hope paid for planting 12 trees in yard.
(CC Accounting Warden)

1768

Feb. 16: "The trees planted in the church yard belonging to the new church have been wantonly cut down by some malicious persons, a reward of £5 is offered for their detection."
(CC Vestry minutes)

1770

Nov. 7: Mr. Young paid for 10 Buttonwood [Sycamores] trees for the church yard [probably replacing those cut down by vandals in February 1768].
(Accounting Warden book)

1785-86

Various entries between 1785 and 1786 indicated that 14 trees were purchased and planted in the yard [presumably following completion of the new churchyard wall by late 1784].[1]
(CC Accounting Warden)

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[1] Judging by the three extant views of the church between this period and 1868, those unidentified trees were probably Weeping Willows and Lombardy Poplars -- all are recognizable in William L. Breton's 1829 lithograph; in a sketch made in 1838 by "P.B.G.;" and in R.S. Smith's 1842 drawing of the west end before the bell tower [see the Breton and Smith views in Appendix, pp. 222 and 223].

1832

February: Large Lombardy Poplars on the south side of the yard were cut down and replaced by greens and shrubbery.[2]
(Smith diary)

1833

March 22: Two Tulip Poplars, donated by E.U. du Pont, a friend of Francis Gurney Smith, have been planted [later removed].
(Smith diary)

1834

Sept. 10: Vestry was considering whether to plant trees along Third and Pine Streets, and whether to remove some trees inside the yard.
(Vestry minutes)

October: The trees under consideration on Sept. 10 were planted along the Third Street sidewalk by J. Findlay, while others within the churchyard were removed.
(Smith diary)

1838

January: Lombardy Poplars on the north side of yard were removed and replaced by "Buttonwood trees" [probably the present line of Sycamores].[3]
(Smith diary)

1841

Nov. 5: Vestry authorized the removal of more Lombardy Poplars on the north and west sides of yard [presumably replaced by the seven Sycamores paid for in early 1842].
(Vestry minutes)

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[2] Several of these poplars are clearly visible in William L. Breton's 1829 lithograph of the church [see Appendix, p. 222].

[3] These rather young looking Sycamores are clearly visible in a photograph taken in 1868 by John Moran from the west end of the churchyard. [see Appendix, p. 224.]

1842

January-March: A. Parker paid for seven "Buttonwood trees" [Sycamore].
(Cash Book)

1842

The central walk through the yard was planted this year with a line of Chestnut trees by Francis Gurney Smith, then accounting warden.
(Delancey's Centennial sermon [1862], p. 63)

1852

Oct. 20: Vestry approved the future planting of trees on the north and west sidewalks outside of the yard. In November, 27 Silver Maples were planted along Pine and Fourth streets.
(Vestry minutes; Smith diary)

1869

Dec. 14: Vestry approved trimming of Osage Orange trees.
(Vestry minutes)

1891

March 10: Vestry authorized the design of a ground plan for the church yard.
(Vestry minutes)

1898

April 13: A plan of improvements to be made for the grounds [for more information, see minutes: June 1, 1899].
(Vestry minutes)

1900

June 12: Vestry heard progress report on $1,000 plan to improve church yard, some of whose goals had already been met. Still to come, for example, all grave mounds were be leveled off.
(Vestry minutes)

1913

March 20: Vestry allotted $200 for planting new trees in yard.
(Vestry minutes)

1929

April 3: To plant privet hedge along the borders of the walkways in the churchyard.
(Vestry minutes)

1936

April 15: Edison Landscape Co. has estimated $847 for treework in yard.
(Vestry minutes)

1944

Dec. 19: A row of "plane trees" [Sycamores] were planted along Lombard and Third Streets.
(Vestry minutes)

1951

September: Heavy summer storm broke trees, damaging church wall.
(Vestry minutes)

1959

Dec. 22: Vestryman Joseph T. Fraser Jr. reported that the Hamilton-Hoffman House at 61st St. and Cobbs Creek Blvd. was to be demolished by the Philadelphia Dept. of Education. The city was offering "fine boxwood hedge" at no charge. [Uncertain whether the hedge was ever obtained.]
(Vestry minutes)

1964

June: Landscaping plan developed for churchyard by Louis F. Schmidt, landscape architect, 160 Carolyn Dr., West Chester, Pa.
(St. Peter's Parish records)

1966

Vestry expected to plant a holly hedge along the central walk next year.
(Parish Annual Report)

1980

Oct. 22: Churchyard trees have been inspected by Melinda Miller of the McFarland Co.; she has presented a $2,790 management plan that calls for the removal of an Oak and Ailanthus and the pruning of several Sycamore trees.
(Vestry minutes)

CHURCHYARD WALKS

It remains unknown exactly when the brick walkways were first laid, but a good guess would be soon after 1784 when the wall around the church yard was completed. Presumably, the walks before that time amounted to tamped-down gravel ways, perhaps covered with wooden planks during the damp season.[1] However, the central walkway through the yard from the Fourth Street gate to Third Street was probably first laid with brick in 1900. The few views of the walk before that time suggest that it remained a gravel or earthen way in the 19th century.

1786

Nov. 24 - Dec. 2: John Palmer paid £36 for "paving" at St. Peter's [either for exterior brick walkway or interior side aisles; parish paid £8 for bricks in December.].
(CC Accounting Warden)

1788

April 1788 to Feb. 1789: Numerous entries for "brick paving" at St. Peter's and alterations and repairs at Christ Church. [Doesn't specify if paving interior or exterior.]
(CC Accounting Warden)

1794

Aug. 15: George Kirby paid "for paving brick, St. Peter's"
(CC Accounting Warden)

1836

April 12: Vestry postponed construction of a paved walkway from Pine Street gate to the Sunday School room [attached to the west wall where the bell tower would stand after 1842].
(Vestry minutes)

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[1] In the years immediately following the church's completion, the congregation had to withstand unpaved streets that turned muddy and sometimes unpassable. On Feb. 16, 1768, the vestry decided to complain to the city council that the streets around the church had become so muddy that parishioners could not get to church. [Christ Church Vestry minutes] While it might be assumed that the city acted sooner, it should be noted that Dennis Conrade submitted a bill to the vestry on Nov. 13, 1797 for laying 650 paving bricks in Third Street. [CC Archives]

1866

Dec. 11: Vestry requested that exterior lights for the walkways be placed at the two Third Street gates.[2]
(Vestry minutes)

1890

March 18: Vestry approved request that brick footpath to the south vestry door be redirected to accommodate a foot stone to the grave of Commodore White.
(Vestry minutes)

1900

June 12: "A hard path [to be built] along the central road of the yard."
(Vestry minutes)

1922

June 13: To repair the brick walk in church yard [doesn't specify where].
(Vestry minutes)

1923

March 13: Driveway through church yard to be repaired and laid with "old-fashioned" bricks.
(Vestry minutes)

1944

Feb. 15: Vestry approved recommendation by George Roberts, chairman of the building committee, to widen the walkway by the northwest door as space for worshippers to congregate after services.[3] (Vestry minutes)

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[2] At the same time, the vestry requested the installation of gas lamps along the walkways from the Third Street gates. [Vestry minutes] This suggests that parishioners were still using Third Street as the traditional approach to the church, a practice gradually becoming a holdover from the 18th century.

[3] The work, contracted to Albert A. Ardis Jr. Co., 308 S. Fourth St. for $445.00, involved the replacement with new brick of a 20 x 40 ft. section "laid to conform with herringbone pattern of present yard" before the main entrance door (northwest) of the church. [April 25, 1944 letter of agreement to the Rev. Frederick

1950

November: The vestry wanted to replace a stone walk at the west end of the church with brick. [Exact location unknown, but probably the connecting walk between the north and south paths bordering the iron fence along Third Street.]
(Vestry minutes)

1955

May 19: Brick walkway from the Pine Street gate to the northwest door to be relaid this summer. [This present brick probably dates from this renovation, which may have included new brick around the north side of the tower entrance.]
(Vestry minutes)

1975

Sept. 17: The Lombardi Co. has installed a new brick sidewalk somewhere in the yard.
(Vestry minutes)

Blatz; St. Peter's parish records] This may also be part of the project that removed the wooden vestibule added to the northwest door in 1923.

CHURCHYARD WALL AND FENCES

It would be safe to assume that St. Peter's church yard contained some form of property demarcation soon after the building opened in 1761, but the first mention of fencing does not appear in the parish records until May 1764 when the vestry paid £5 for two gate locks.[1] Judging by entry for 1776, the early fence was a wooden post-and-board affair of cedar. It was replaced in the summer of 1776, just in time for the British Army to occupy Philadelphia that winter and tear down the structure for fire wood. In 1784, after two years of considering the matter, the vestry finally broke down and mounted a fundraising campaign to construct a brick wall.[2] A building contract was signed that summer with two local masons, one of whom later withdrew, but the wall was completed nevertheless by later that year. The wall has been repointed or repaired at least six times over the last 200 years, mostly during this century when it received repeated attention, owed undoubtedly to years of deferred maintenance.

In 1948, when a large section along Pine Street collapsed just west of Third, it became abundantly clear that the wall was suffering from decades of little maintenance. Nonetheless, its relatively few demands for attention over two centuries suggest that the original work was very well done. Among the other barriers around the yard, the iron-rod fence with its Gothic-style gate posts that still borders the west side of the Pine Street entrance walk was installed sometime before 1860. The chain-link cyclone fence on the south side bordering the parking lot used by St. Peter's School was first erected in 1947.

1770

Nov. 22: Vestry paid workman for repairs to the church fence. [Part of this wooden fence (presumably cedar) had been built to hold a cow kept by the rector's wife, Mrs. Duché.]
(CC Accounting Warden)

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[1] That winter, the existence of a fence was confirmed by the entry for December 22 where Joseph Young was paid £8 for moving the fence in the church yard. [CC Accounting Warden]

[2] The ability to construct a wall following the present boundaries had been provided in late 1782 when the parish acquired 11 house lots once controlled by the Penn Proprietorship; these lots formed what is presently the northwest quadrant of the church yard. [see Conveyance Plan in Appendix, p. 214.]

1776

June 10: John Young paid for putting up new cedar post and board fence with ironwork around the church yard.[3]
(CC Accounting Warden)

1778

Jan. 29: British Army officer has ordered St. Peter's wooden fence taken down for fire wood.
(CC Vestry minutes)

1782

Jan. 4: Vestry named committee to study the possibility of building a "brick wall" around the church.[4]
(CC Vestry minutes)

1783

April 2: Thomas Mitchell paid for repairing St. Peter's wooden fence.
(CC Accounting Warden)

1784

April 28: Vestry has finally decided to build brick wall around the "burying ground."
(Subscription Book - CC Archives)

April-May: The rector, the Rev. William White, reimbursed "for mending St. Peter's Church fence;" entries for 35 cedar posts and 150 cedar planks.
(CC Accounting Warden)

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[3] The previous fence had been declared "totally decayed" and was replaced just in time for the British Army to break up the new structure for firewood during their winter occupation in 1777-78.

[4] Most probably, what catalyzed this project was the parish's anticipated acquisition that fall of the "Pine Street Lots" -- 11 subdivided house lots fronting on Pine Street just east of Fourth that had been held by the state, the assignee of the Penn Proprietorship's holdings since the Revolution. [see Conveyance Plan in Appendix, p. 214.] The project did not commence, however, until August 1784.

June 28: Contract signed with John Parker and William Gray to build a brick wall around St. Peter's burying yard.[5]

June 29: "Whereas sundry members...has [sic] expressed a desire to contribute towards erecting an iron palisade fence in front of St. Peter's Church instead of the brick wall there proposed...we the subscribers do therefore promise to pay the several sums annexed to our respective names provided an iron palisade fence should be placed in front of St. Peter's Church but not otherwise."
(Subscription Book - CC Archives)

Aug. 14: William Gray signed contract to build the wall alone without John Parker who had withdrawn; proposes to build only 500 feet this season.
(Contract: CC Archives)

Nov. 23-29: Samuel Wheeler and Robert Towers [a vestrymen] paid £35 "for making palisades for St. Peter's Church wall."[6]
(CC Accounting Warden)

Dec. 6: John Morris paid for mending St. Peter's fence.[7]
(CC Accounting Warden)

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[5] June 28, 1784 Construction Contract stipulated a 4-ft. deep by 1-ft. 6-inch thick stone foundation; a 9-inch stone base of the same thickness; a 1 ft., 3-inch high by 1-ft. 2-inch thick brick wall rising to the top of the watertable; followed by 3 ft. 6 inches of "the best 9-inch work and coped with bricks made for that purpose and, if required, a course below the coping to be one-brick-and-a-half thick of the best hard burnt bricks, and stock bricks for the piers. No deductions to be made for gateways, nor any addition for piers....shall have the liberty to erect a palisade iron fence in front of St. Peter's church with gates on each end thereof." [Contract contains an elevation drawing of the wall including the foundation, and clearly shows the present stone capping; CC Archives.]

[6] Wheeler was a master blacksmith who made the balcony for Congress Hall in 1786, and the iron picket fence and gate on Second Street to Old Christ Church in c. 1795-97. Wheeler is also reputed to have made canon for Washington's army at the Battle of the Brandywine, and the iron chain that Washington stretched across the Hudson River above West Point to prevent the British from invading New York by river. [The Evening Bulletin, Feb. 6, 1922.]

[7] Note that a wooden fence remained along part of the yard, most likely bordering most of the south side between Third and Fourth Streets. See other mentions in 1787, 1790 and 1847.

Dec. 20: William Gray received first payment of £37,10s for building the wall.[8]
(CC Accounting Warden)

1785

Jan. 24: John Morris paid for "mending the covering to St. Peter's wall."
(CC Accounting Warden)

1787

Feb. 27: George McKay paid £1,13s "repairing fence at St. Peter's."
(CC Accounting Warden)

March 8: Parish paid £3,15s "for boards for St. Peter's fence."
(CC Accounting Warden)

1790

Aug. 18: William Williams paid £3,17s "for putting up a fence between St. Peter's Church ground and the Hon. Richard Peters."
(CC Accounting Warden)

1797

July 24: Vestry to pay the estate of William Steeles who was owed £8,5s for "repairing the caps and balls on the wall of St. Peter's Church."
(CC Vestry minutes)

1805

March 11: Vestry ordered "the wall or fence of the burial ground to be repaired and any other repairs...."
(CC Vestry minutes)

1835

July 10: Jacob Rambo has produced 200 feet of iron chain for fence to border walkway near the family vaults in northeast corner of yard.
(Smith diary; Cash Book)

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[8] Note: all of the tradesmen and suppliers connected to the wall's construction were still being paid as late as 1786.

Sept. 8: Vestry authorized placement of iron post-and-chain fence around the family vaults on the north side of church; installed the following Spring.
(Vestry minutes)

1847

April 13: Vestry "to have necessary repairs to the fences done."
(Vestry minutes)

1860

Photograph taken from the northeast corner of Third and Pine Streets shows the present iron rod fence with its Gothic-style gate posts that borders the west side of the Pine Street entrance walk.[9]
(Print Collection - HSP Manuscripts Room)

1869

Dec. 14: Vestry approved removal of the iron picket railing on the churchyard wall.
(Vestry minutes)

1875

Dec. 14: M. Walker & Sons paid $162.67 for iron railing.
(Cash Book)

1890

Feb. 18: Vestry authorized replacement of post-and-chain fence with cedar posts.
(Vestry minutes)

1901-04

Between 1901 and 1904, the vestry spent at least $1,200 to repoint larger sections of the wall, but minutes never specified where.
(Vestry minutes)

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[9] Photo credited to McAllister & Bro., identified in McElroy's City Directory for 1858 as "William Y. and Thomas H. McAllister, opticians, 728 Chestnut St." McAllister was one of the city's leading businesses for photography and "magic lantern" (or painted slide) creations.

1920-21

Between the springs of 1920 and 1922, the churchyard wall was repaired again [presumably repointed], but minutes never specified where.
(Vestry minutes)

1923

May 23: One of the brick pillars for the gate on Fourth Street was damaged by a contractor who was building the driveway; both pillars will be rebuilt.
(Vestry minutes)

1941

Oct. 14: The churchyard wall, "in urgent need of attention," required $2,000 worth of "radical repairs" due to age.
(Vestry minutes)

1942

May 19: To insert a marble slab in the western post of the main gate on Pine Street inscribed: "1761 St. Peter's Church." Designed by architect and building committee chairman George B. Roberts.
(Vestry minutes)

1944

Feb. 15: Vestry approved report of building committee chairman George Roberts recommending removal of iron pickets on the high sections of the brick walls at Third and Fourth Streets [possibly added to the wall in 1875].
(Vestry minutes)

1947

May 26: To erect a chain-link cyclone fence between the churchyard and the playground/parking lot.
(Vestry minutes)

1948

June 7: A portion of the Pine Street wall has collapsed almost 100 feet west of Third Street; and most of the entire wall requires extensive repair; the Third Street brick gate pillars and wall also need rebuilding. [Repairs that fall paid by an anonymous parishioner through the rector -- probably Mrs. Charles Fearon.]
(Vestry minutes)

1951

September: Heavy summer storm has dropped some trees and damaged the church wall and its iron picket fence.
(Vestry minutes)

October: Iron picket fence on Fourth Street wall in poor condition; recommended for removal as Third Street railing was in 1944.
(Vestry minutes)

1954

April 26: Trash truck has seriously damaged the Fourth Street gate, pillars and section of wall.
(Vestry minutes)

1955

May 19: To repoint the Third and Fourth Street walls; Harry M. Hicks to build a brick trash enclosure at the Fourth Street gate this summer.
(Vestry minutes)

1956

Feb. 27: The Fourth Street gate pillar (south side) has been broken again by a trashman's truck; in March, the vestry decides to add concrete-filled iron posts in front of the pillars for shielding; later, they decide to widen the entrance by moving the south pillar one foot. [Apparently the gate itself is quite worn - see July 11].
(Vestry minutes)

1980

June 18: Vestry to take bids for repair of the Bier Shed wall. [Probably the south wall since they want to share cost with St. Peter's School.]
(Vestry minutes)

1982

Sept. 15: Construction work [at the school] has demolished the south wall by the Bier Shed and will be rebuilt.
(Vestry minutes)

1989

Aug. 23: Fourth Street wall near Pine Street has been repaired [after having been struck by an automobile].
(Vestry minutes)

TIMELINE ABBREVIATIONS

Accounting Warden	St. Peter's Accounting Warden Book
Archives Guide	to the Microfilm Archives of Old Christ Church, Philadelphia
CC Accounting Warden	Christ Church Accounting Warden Book
CC Archives	Christ Church Archives
CC Cash book	Parish Cash Book of Christ Church
CC Minutes	Christ Church Vestry Minutes
Cash book	Cash Book of St. Peter's Church
Delancey's sermon	Bishop William DeLancey's published sermon for St. Peter's centennial (1861)
Dorr's history	The Rev. Benjamin Dorr, An Historical Account of Christ Church (1841)
Evans's timeline	The Rev. Allen Evans parish timeline
FLR notes	Research notes of the Rev. F. Lee Richards
HSP	Historical Society of Pennsylvania
Jones's history	Charles H. Jones, St. Peter's: 1761-1892 [Vestryman: 1888-1911]
Lewis plan	Clifford Lewis's Property Conveyance Plan (1949)
Parish records	St. Peter's parish records
Roberts' history	Unpublished article of St. Peter's construction by George B. Roberts
Roberts' papers	George B. Roberts Collection -- Historical Society of Pennsylvania
Robinson's history	Article on church organ history by Albert F. Robinson, former choirmaster

Rust's history	Unpublished article on St. Peter's bells by Pamela Rust
Smith diary	of Francis Gurney Smith, Accounting Warden
The Tracker	The Tracker: Newsletter of the Organ Historical Society (1959-1960).
Vestry minutes	St. Peter's Church Vestry Minutes

ST. PETER'S 1758 BUILDING CONTRACT

"Articles of Agreement Indented had made Concluded and fully agreed upon by and between John Kearsley, Evan Morgan, Jacob Duché [Sr.], James Child, Redmond Conyngham, Alexander Stedman, Atwood Shute, Samuel McCall Jr., John Wilcocks, Joseph Sims, and William Plumstead of the City of Philadelphia, Gentlemen, a Committee of the Vestry of Christ Church in the City of the one part and Robert Smith of the same city, House Carpenter, of the other part in manner and form following, that is to say, First the said Robert Smith in Consideration of the Covenants, promises, payments and agreements herein after mentioned...shall and will with all Convenient Speed Erect, Build and in a Workmanlike manner Substantially Build or Cause to be built on the East End of a Certain Lott of Land lately given for that purpose by the Honorable the Proprietors in the said City bounded on Pine Street and third street of the said City, a Church or House for the Worship of Almighty God according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Church of England of the Dimensions and form following, that is to say, of the Length of Ninety feet above the Base or Water Table and of the Breadth of Sixty feet above the Base, also that the Foundation of the same Building shall be Stone and Mortar four feet below the present Surface of the Earth, That the Bottom or lower part of the said Stone Foundation shall be three feet in Thickness and at the top thereof two feet three inches thick, That the walls above the said Foundation shall be Thirty-Seven feet high and composed of good Merchantable Brick and Mortar and to be two bricks and a half or twenty-one Inches thick in the sides of the said Building and Gable Ends or Walls in the pedements [pediments] above the Square to be one Brick and a half or fourteen Inches thick and to be Carryed up or raised as high as the top of the Roof, That there shall be Rustick Work on each Corner of the said Building to be made of Stock Bricks properly Moulded for that purpose, That a Margin shall be made of the said Stock Bricks round each Window of the said Building to Project before the face of the Walls, That there shall be in the South and North sides of the said Buildings two Doors Twelve feet high and five feet wide opposite to each other with Frontispieces, That there shall be in the South and North Sides aforesaid large Circular headed Windows below or in the First Story and five Smaller Circular headed Windows above or in the Second Story, That the Window Cases and Sashes are to be made by the said Smith independent of the Brick Work, That the Sash Lights shall be made of Round two Inch heart of pine plank and the said Smith shall find and provide good English Glass for the same Sash of Ten by fourteen Inches each pane, That in the East End of the Said Buildings there shall be two large Circular headed windows

below or in the first Story with One large Venetian Window neatly finished on the outside, That in the same East End there shall be two Smaller Circular headed Windows above or in the Second Story with one Round Window in the Pedement, That in the West End of the said Building there shall be Three large Circular headed Windows below or in the first Story and three smaller Circular headed Windows above or in the Second Story, That there shall be a Cupola Erected and Compleately finished on the West End of the said Building of Ten feet Diamenter and at least Thirty two feet high from the Top of the Roof to the Top of the Vane, that the said Smith shall provide and fix thereon a large ball and vane composed of Copper and to be neatly Gilt, That there shall be a larger Modillion Cornice to the Eves and round the said Building and five larger Urns properly placed and fixed at the Corners and tops of one Pedement at the Ends of the Building, That the Roof of the said Building shall Trussed well framed and bound with Iron, That the frame of a Circular Ceiling shall be made and fixed under the Roof ready for the Plaisterer to lath and plaister on together with a larger Cornice under the Spring of the Arch for the Circular Ceiling, That there shall be two Stone steps to each of the four doors or more Stone Steps if Necessary, That there shall be a Stone Window Stool to each of the Windows to Set the Frames upon with a Moulding on the outer side to project over the Walls to Carry the Water off, That there shall be Key Stones and Imposts or Blocks of Stone to the Arch of each Window, and the said Robert Smith...shall and will at his...own proper Costs and Charges purchase find and provide all and every Material, to wit, Stones, Bricks, Lime, Sand, Timber, Scantling plank boards, Iron and Smith Work, Lead, Copper, Nails, Shingles and Glass and every Material Necessary for the Erecting [of the] Building and in a Manner aforesaid Compleatly finishing the Building or House together with all Workmen Artificers and Labourers for doing and performing the same agreeable to the plan thereof hereunto annexed, and shall and will at his own proper Costs and Charges paint or cause the whole outside work aforesaid to be painted and well finished with three different Coats of paint of a good stone Colour well laid on, And if That the said Robert Smith...shall Cause or procure the said Building to be Erected and finished in manner aforesaid and as near agreeable to the hereto annexed plan as may be on or before the first day of November which be in the Year of our Lord One Thousand and Seven Hundred and fifty nine, And the said [Vestry]...shall and will well and truly pay or cause to be paid to the said Robert Smith...the Just and full Sum of Two Thousand three Hundred and Ten pounds lawful money of Pennsylvania at the days and times and in proportions hereinafter mentioned for payment thereof....and Lastly the said Robert Smith for himself...doth promise to and with the

said Committee from time to time hereafter to be under the Direction and Instruction of the said Committee touching and Concerning the said Premises, for the true performance whereof the said parties do Bind themselves their Heirs, Executors and Administrators each to the each in the penal Sum of Four Thousand Pounds money aforesaid ....It is agreeable that the scaffolds be kept up for the use of the Plaisterer."

CONTRACT'S BUILDING AND PAYMENT SCHEDULE:

- £100: Sept. 1 or when the foundation is begun.
- " : Oct. 1 [no imposed conditions]
- " : Dec. 1 [" " "]
- " : May 1 [" " "]
- £170: When the masons begin to lay bricks.
- " : When the brick walls are six ft. high.
- " : " " " " " 12 ft. "
- " : " " " " " 18 ft. "
- " : " " " " " 24 ft. "
- " : " " " " " 30 ft. "
- " : " " " " " 37 ft. "
- £100: When the roof and cupola are raised.
- " : When the roof is shingled and cupola finished.
- " : When all the windows are glazed and installed.
- £320: When the building is completed and painted.

A two-story brick church with a six-story brick tower and wood steeple known as St. Peter's Church, and situated on the lot on the southwest corner of Pine and Third Streets, in the City of Philadelphia, $3,000 insured.

Dimensions of the church 60 feet wide by 90 feet deep, and about 36 feet high; the walls are 22 inches thick up to the square; the roof is framed with eight principal rafters, purlined and ridge pole, cedar shingles, double pitch roof, tin gutters and two conductors each side, heavy wood eave, cornice, dentils and bedmoulding, and level and raking cornice, the same east and west end;

the first-story has three 25-light circular top windows each side and two doorways with pediment heads and panel doors and stone sills; two windows the same east and west end; the second story has five 48-light circular top windows on each side, two ditto east and west end, and a large Venetian window in the east end or front, stone sills, blocks and keystones to windows, sash single hung; the building all lathed and plastered, glass 10 x 14;

the lower floor is divided into 89 pews wainscoted and painted capping; yellow pine floor boards and oak joist to pews, the aisles are laid with white marble pavement at east end and middle aisle, and a dark slate stone in the west end and side aisles;

a gallery on each side and part of the west end supported by 14 turned columns wainscoted front with architrave, frieze, cornice and pilasters, 29 pews each side, yellow pine floors in gallery;

an organ gallery at east end supported by two large open pilasters on pedestals with architraves, frieze and cornice, two large neat urns on the top of them, two plain turned wood columns and two cast-iron columns, neat wainscoted front, circular ends;

a neat pulpit and reading desk with a canopy over the pulpit at the west end, a projection stack of the pulpit and reading desk with stairs in it up to the pulpit and to second story of tower;

a chancel at the east end with heavy turned balusters and heavy handrail of walnut; a heavy wood cornice around ceiling and ceiling arched; two flights of open newel stairs, square steps and winders, painted handrail, close string, turned balusters; a flight of straight stairs to the organ gallery;

two flues on the north and south sides for stove pipes, a circular window and sash in the peak east and west ends;

The tower is 24 feet 6 inches square including the buttresses at the corners and 110 feet high with a battlemented top coped with marble, the walls between the

buttresses are two feet, two inches thick, a vestibule at the north and south sides about seven feet square, one story high, double pitch roof covered with galvanized tin, one segment head doorway with panel doors and marble sill on the south side and a pediment pitch doorway, doors and sill to the north vestibule, marble tesselated pavement in each, washboard, and coved ceiling;

the first story of the tower has a 25-light, 10 x 14 window, sash double-hung; a doorway each side into vestibule with circular top sash folding doors to them each six lights, 9 x 16 glass, a sash door into the stairway or projection back of the pulpit, small doorway on the south side with lined panel door and step ladder up to the second story; oak joist first floor and Carolina heart pine floorboard, two side closets, double worked panel doors, grecian ovolo mouldings and plain casings; a flue for stove pipe in the northwest corner; this room is occupied as the Vestryroom, stucco cornice and centre piece in this room;

the second story has three 48-light windows with circular heads same as those in the church, a stairway partitioned off on the southeast corner, a side closet, grecian ovolo mouldings and washboard, heart pine floor boards, a sash door, and a flight of straight steps and windows to the first story, a door also into the stairway to...

...the third story which is the ringing room and has the same number and kind of windows as the second story, yellow pine floor boards, a doorway into the projection back of the pulpit which is rough floored and a step ladder in it up to the roof and a passageway to the trap door;

the fourth story has four windows the same as the third story rough white pine floor boards grooved, and is occupied as a ringing room;

the fifth story is occupied with the bells and has four window frames with revolving blinds in two parts in each, massive and heavy timber framing for eight bells with all the fixtures and requisite apparatus, rough floor;

the sixth story has four rounded windows with sash in two parts hung with hinges to each;

the stairs for the second to the upper story are open, winding and straight steps with plain posts and railing; the second story is neatly plastered and third story is rough plastered;

the roof of the tower outside of the spire is covered with copper; all the girders are made pinned and bolted. The super structure or spire is octagon form and composed of wood, the posts of which are of white pine 90 feet long, and 75 feet of it is above the top of the tower; the posts are well secured and bolted into large girders struted and braced, the outside is covered with the best cedar shingles, moulded cedar plank ribs on the angles, coped with a large

round cedar corona covered with copper, near the base of the spire in each side are square panels formed as doors and over these are circular windows with slates in them and circular windows with slates in them about 35 feet from the corona, a cornice [and] architrave above the lower windows.

The spire is surmounted by a copper ball, gilt, 2 ft, 9 inches diameter; above the ball is a cross 6 ft, 6 inches high, the cross beam or arms 4 ft, 6 inches long made of boards and plank covered with copper and gilt; over this are the electric points attached to an iron rod leading to the ground.

Signed, D.H. [David Henry] Flickwir, Surveyor [and Vestryman]
Approved, F.G. [Francis Gurney] Smith, Accounting Warden.

RECTORS OF ST. PETER'S CHURCH

1st

The Rev. Dr. Robert Jenney (1742-1762)

2nd

The Rev. Dr. Richard Peters (1762-1775)

3rd

The Rev. Jacob Duché, Jr. (1775-1779)

4th

The Rev. William White (1779-1836)

5th

The Rev. Dr. William H. DeLancey (1836-1839)

6th

The Rev. Dr. William Odenheimer (1840-1859)

7th

The Rev. George Leeds (1860-1867)

8th

The Rev. Dr. Thomas F. Davies (1868-1889)

9th

The Rev. Dr. William H. Vibbert (1890-1891)

10th

The Rev. J. Lewis Parks (1891-1896)

11th

The Rev. Dr. Richard H. Nelson (1897-1904)

12th

The Rev. Edward M. Jefferys (1905-1937)

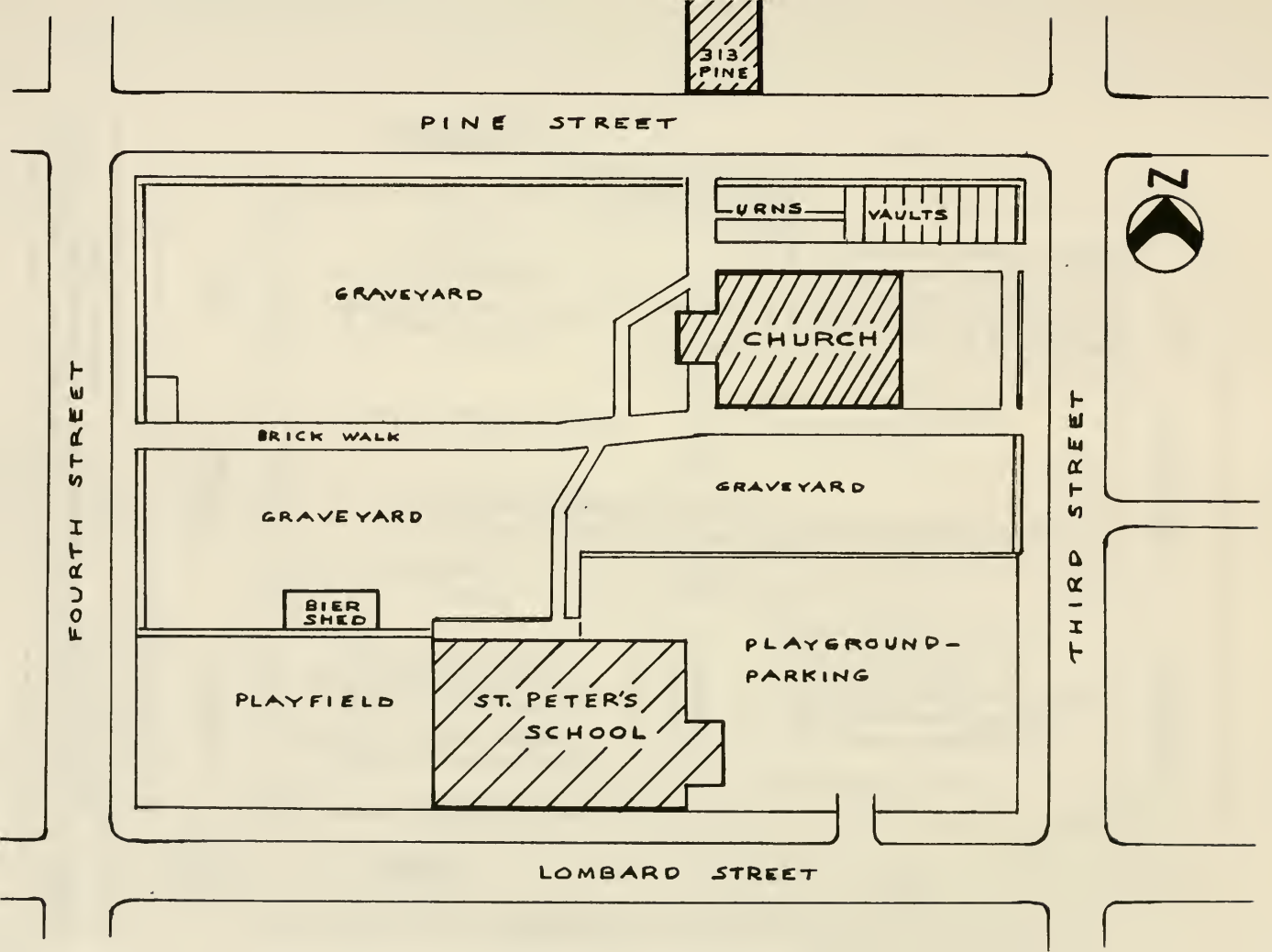

313 PINE
PINE STREET
URNS
VAULTS
GRAVEYARD
CHURCH
BRICK WALK
GRAVEYARD
GRAVEYARD
BIER SHED
PLAYGROUND-PARKING
PLAYFIELD
ST. PETER'S SCHOOL
FOURTH STREET
THIRD STREET
LOMBARD STREET

Diagram for identifying Conveyances of the several parcels of Land comprising the Holdings of St. Peters Church in the Block bounded by Pine, Lombard, Third & Fourth St.

Approx. Scale 50'=1" —clip— December 7, 1949

Conveyance No.

LOMBARD ST.

Old Nos. 77/217 79/319 81/321 83/323

"N" —166'— "O" 18' 18' 18' 19' Alley

(10) "THE PLAYGROUND" —177'—

School District City of Philadelphia, To St. Peters Church. 1940

PARISH No. (6) (7) (8) GUILD HA. (9) 77'

—116'9"—

"P" 32' "K" 39'11¼" "F"

"Gunning Bedford and George Fudge" —193'—

—198'—

No.2. Edgar To Duché et al, July 28, 1758

No.3. Duché To United Churches, May 3, 1768

—198'—

"L" 40'1" "G" 62'1" "E" —62'— —396'— "H"

No.2. – Edgar To Duché et al. July 28, 1758

No.3. – Duché To United Churches, May 3, 1769

"TO BE USED FOR A BURIAL PLACE"

"N.E. Cor. German Company"

—178'— —396'— —218'—

"B" "C" "D" "A" —178'— "THE CHURCH PLOT"

No1. The Proprietaries To Duché et al May 2. 1757. Site for a New Church.

No.3. Duché To United Churches May 3. 1769. "Including The Church"

102'± "Street Intended To be Opened"

(Now Part of St. Peters Churchyard)

— "PINE STREET LOTS" —

No.4. Supreme Exc. Council To Sims, Oct. 14, 1782

No.5. Sims To United Churches, Nov. 8, 1792 "for the proper use, benefit, behoof &c.

— Eleven Lots, Nos. 1704-1714 —

—218'— "J" "K" 102'7

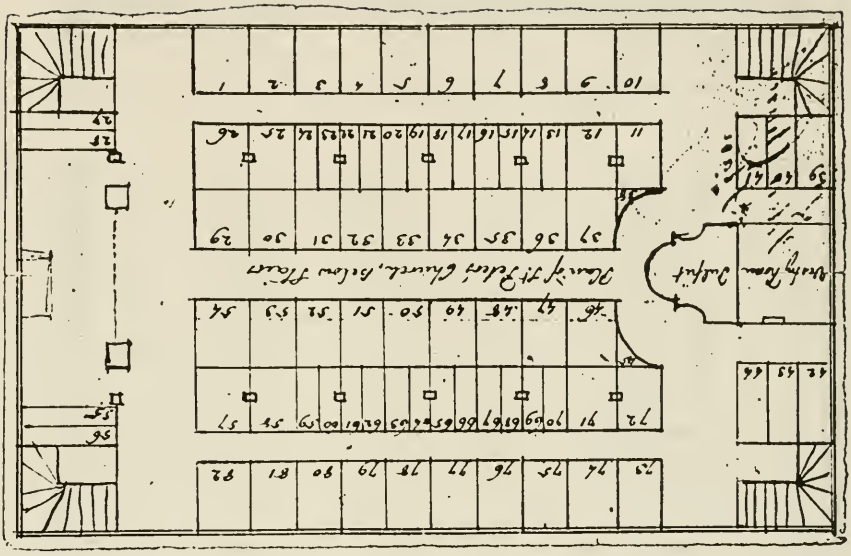
PINE ST.

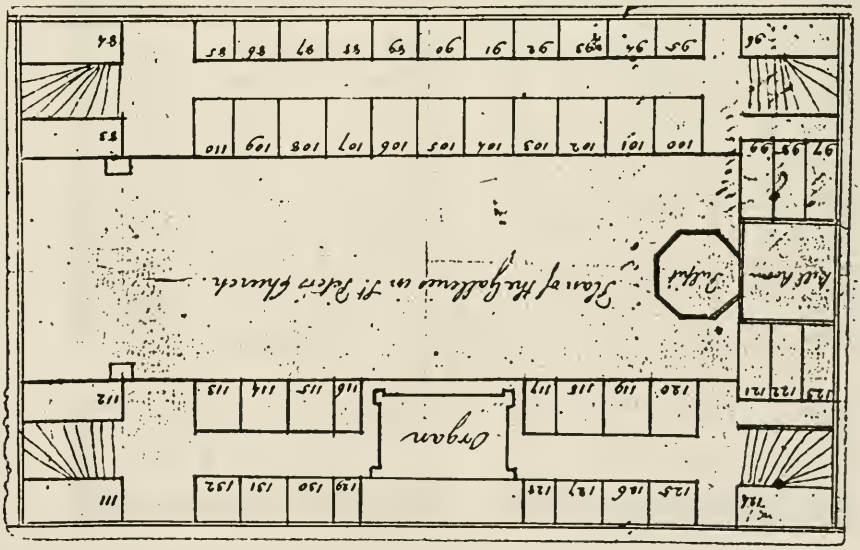
3½ → Old No. 89

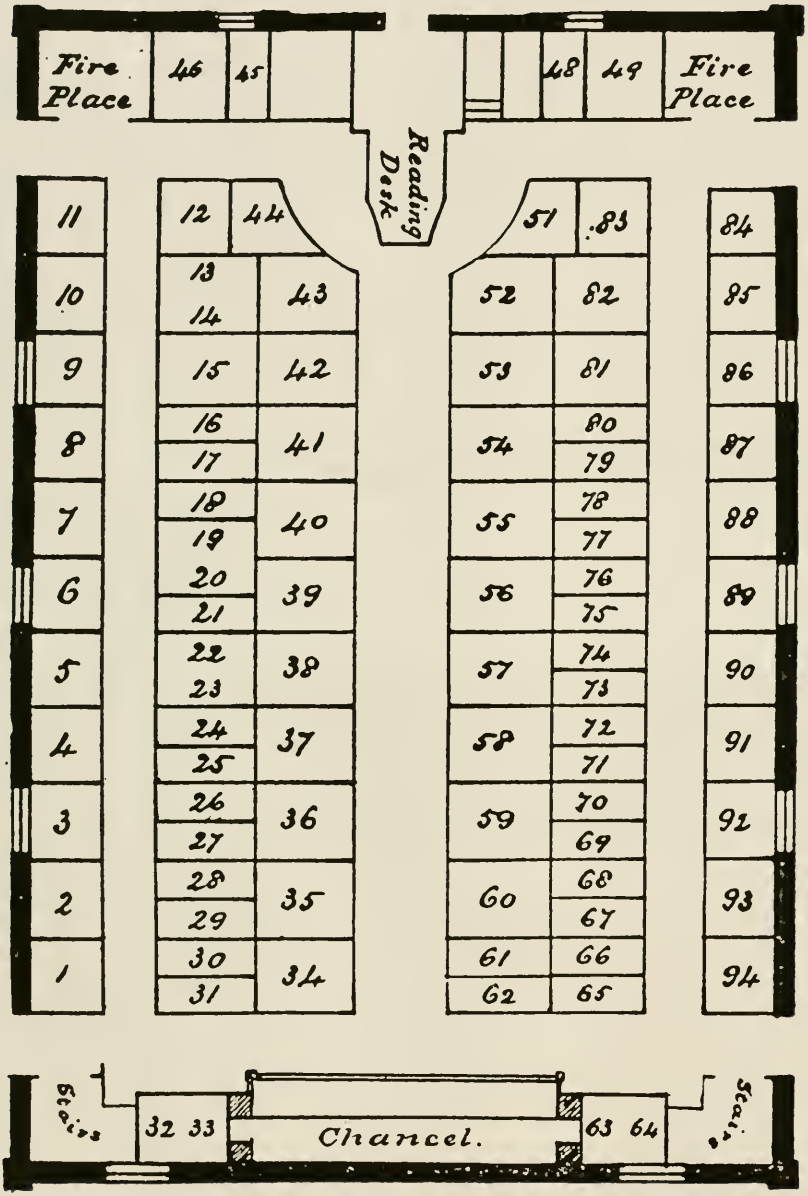
1724 HTS

THIRD ST. "Third Street from River Delaware"

FOURTH ST. "Fourth Street from River Delaware"






Fire Place
46
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Fire Place
Reading Desk
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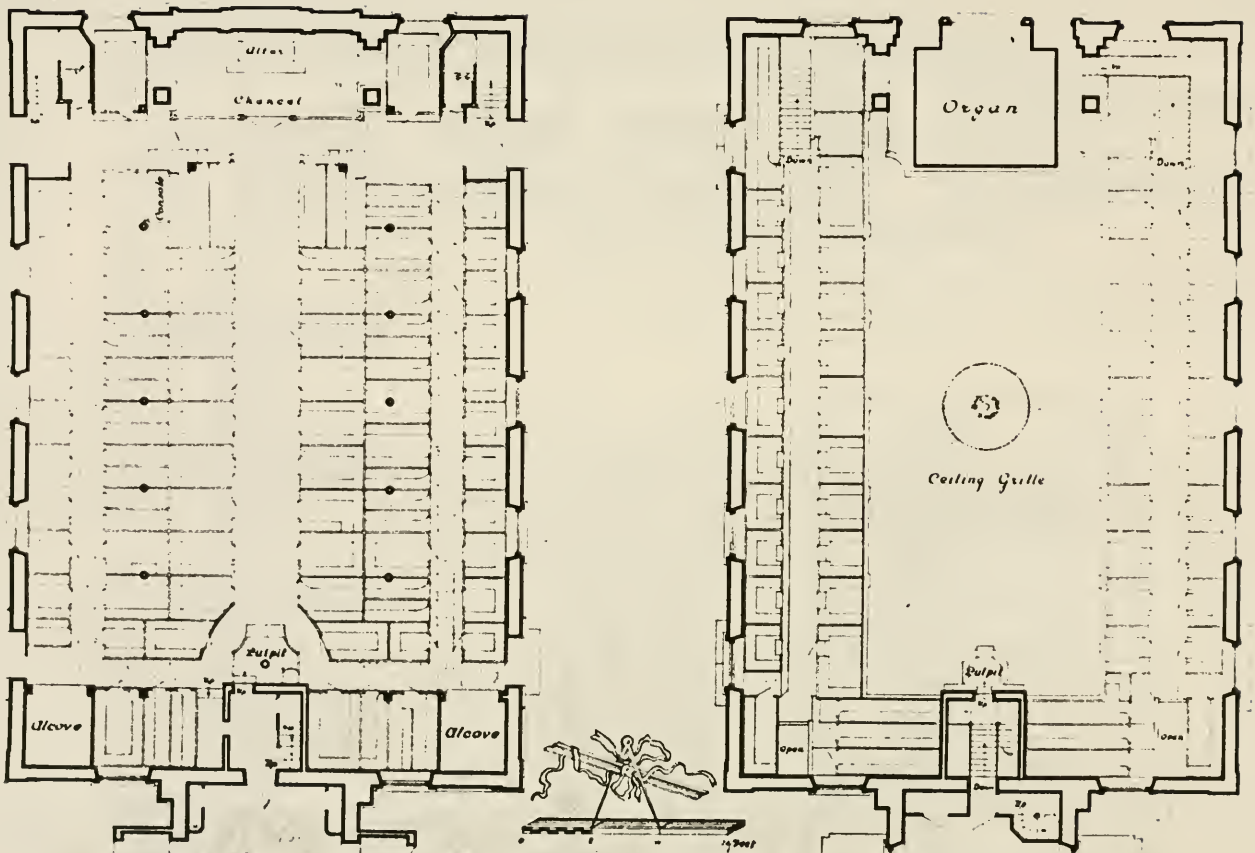
Stairs
32 33
Chancel.
63 64
Stairs



St. Peter's Church
Third and Pine Streets
Philadelphia Pa.

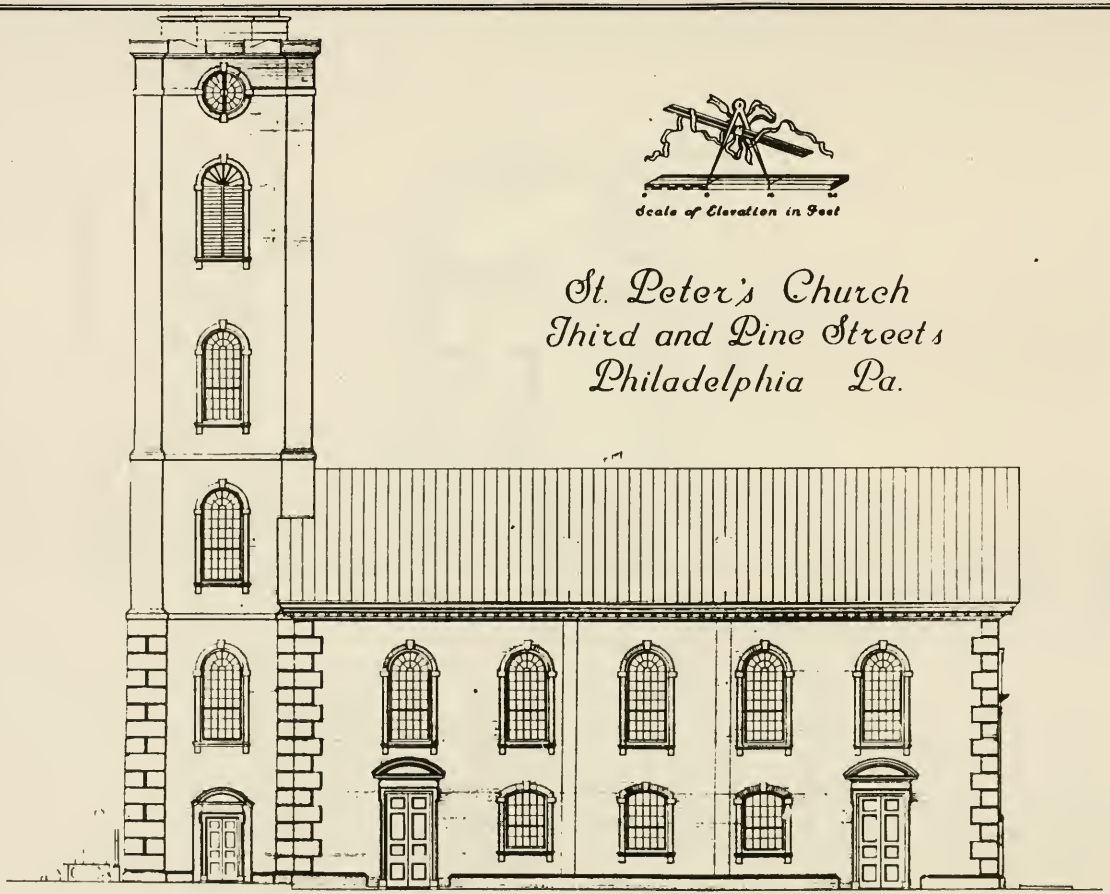
Section looking West

St. Peter's Church
Third and Pine Streets
Philadelphia Pa.

Section looking North

Measured & Drawn by L.K. Jackson 1932.

Scale of Sections in Feet



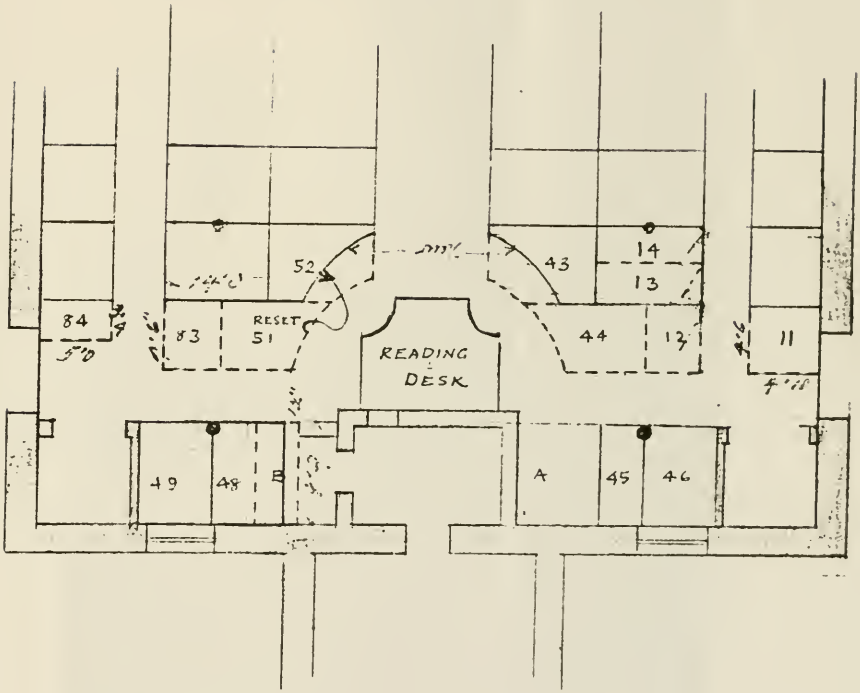
St. Peter's Church
Third and Pine Streets
Philadelphia Pa.

South Elevation

North Elevation similar, except doors have triangular Pediments.

Measured and Drawn by B. Glichlor 1933.

GEORGE B. ROBERTS
REGISTERED ARCHITECT
1820 DeLancey Place
Philadelphia

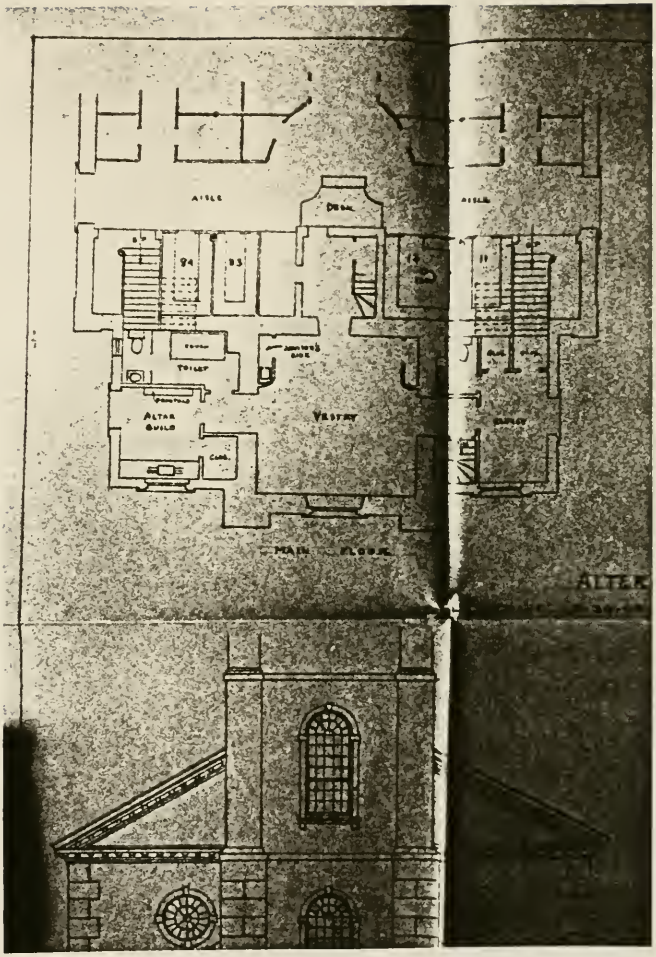


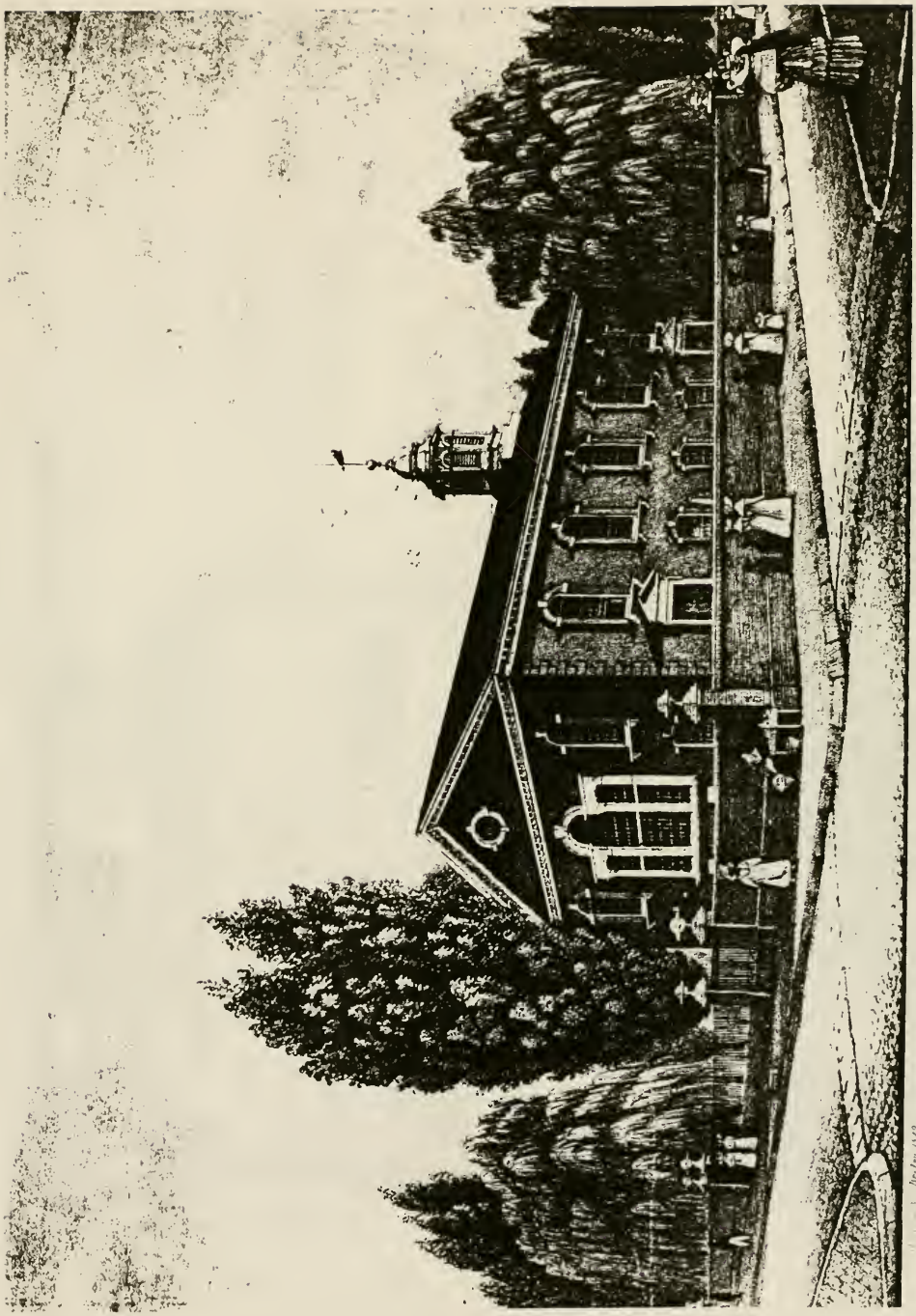
REMOVE 84, 83, 51
44, 12, 11

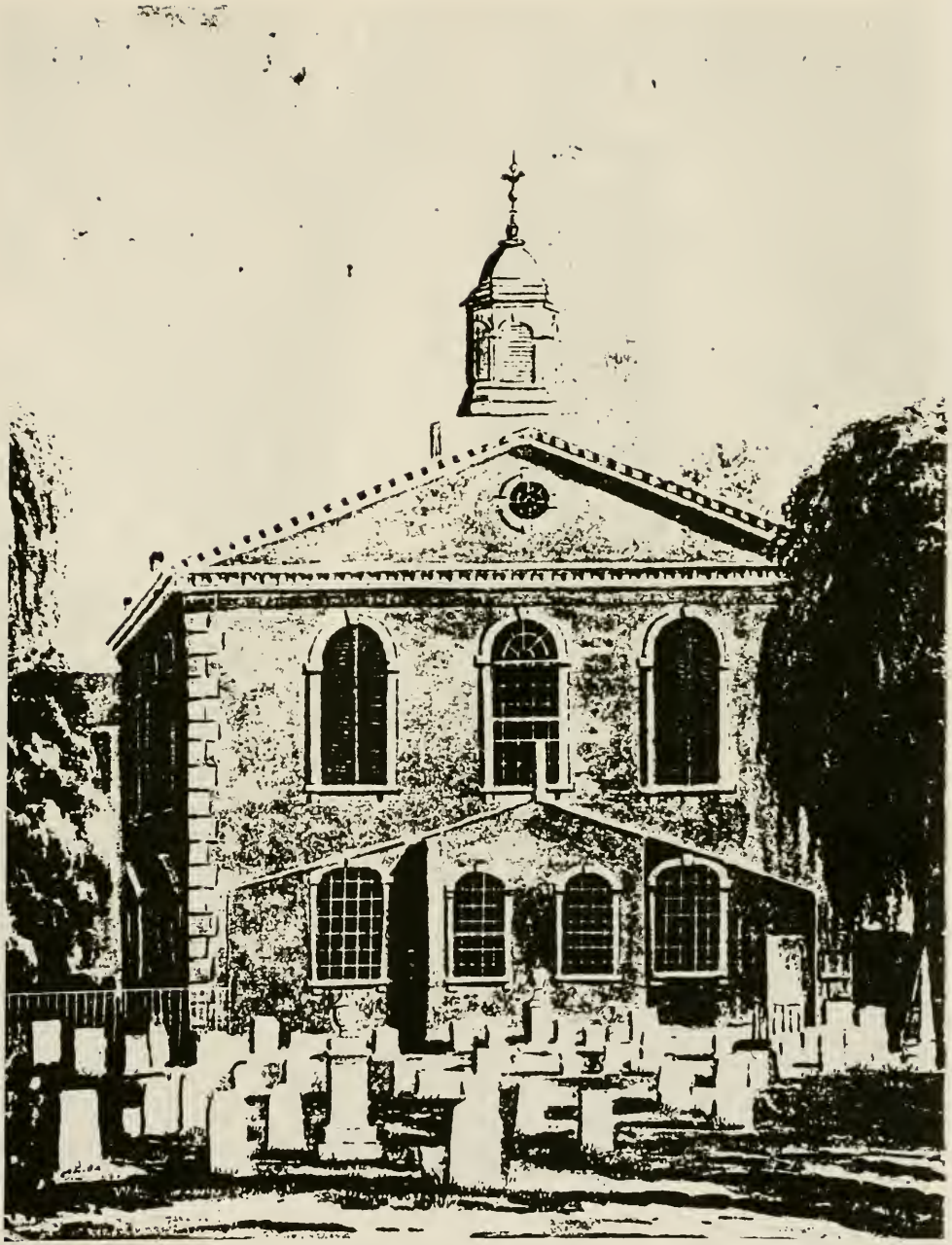
CUT SMALLER 52, 43

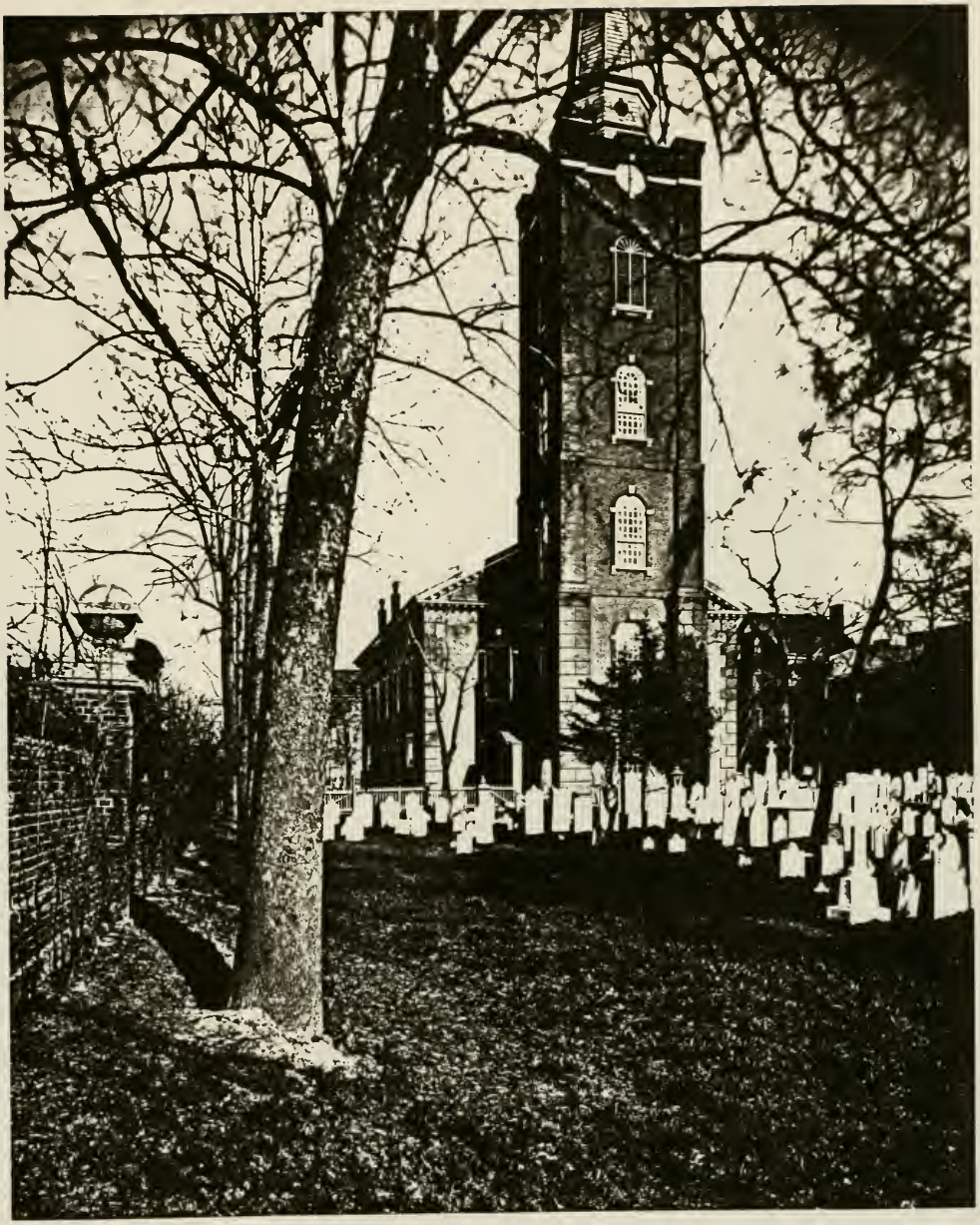
TAKE OUT PARTITION BET. 13 & 14
BET. 48 & B

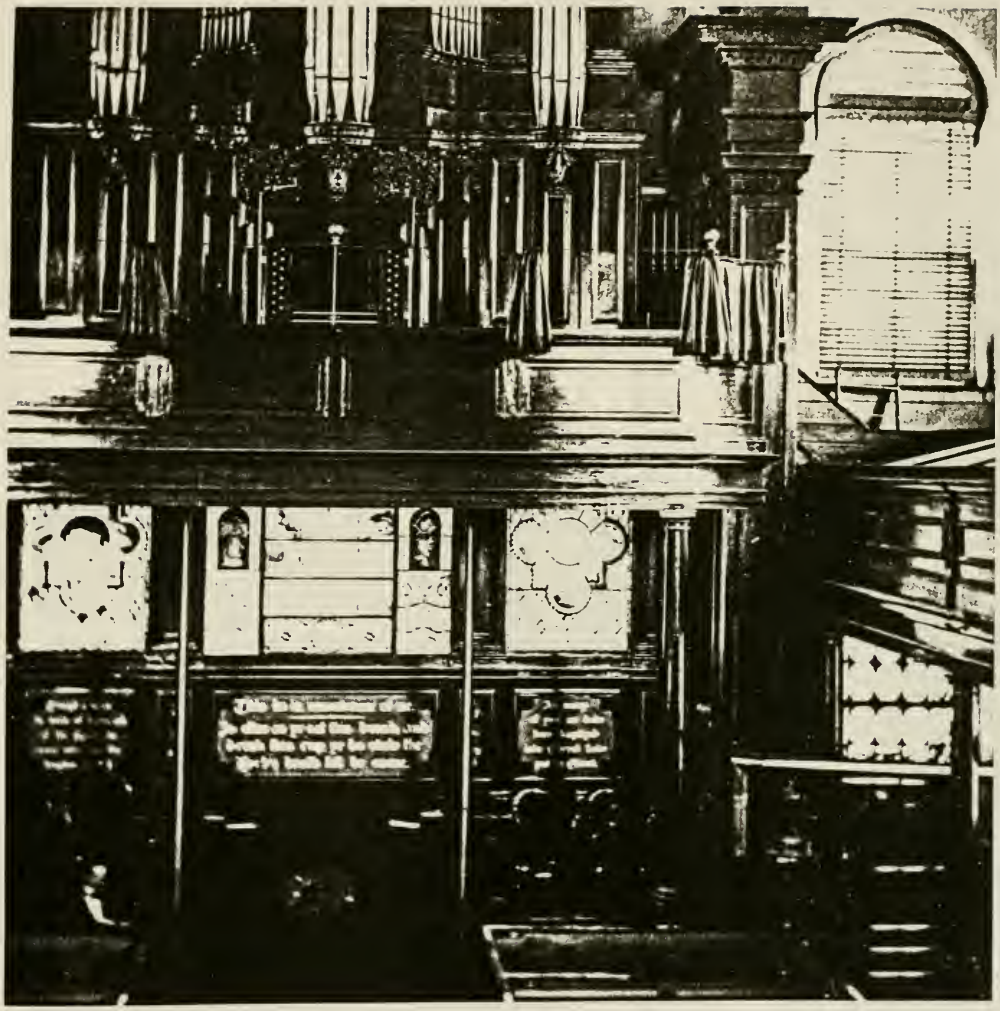
ENLARGE 48

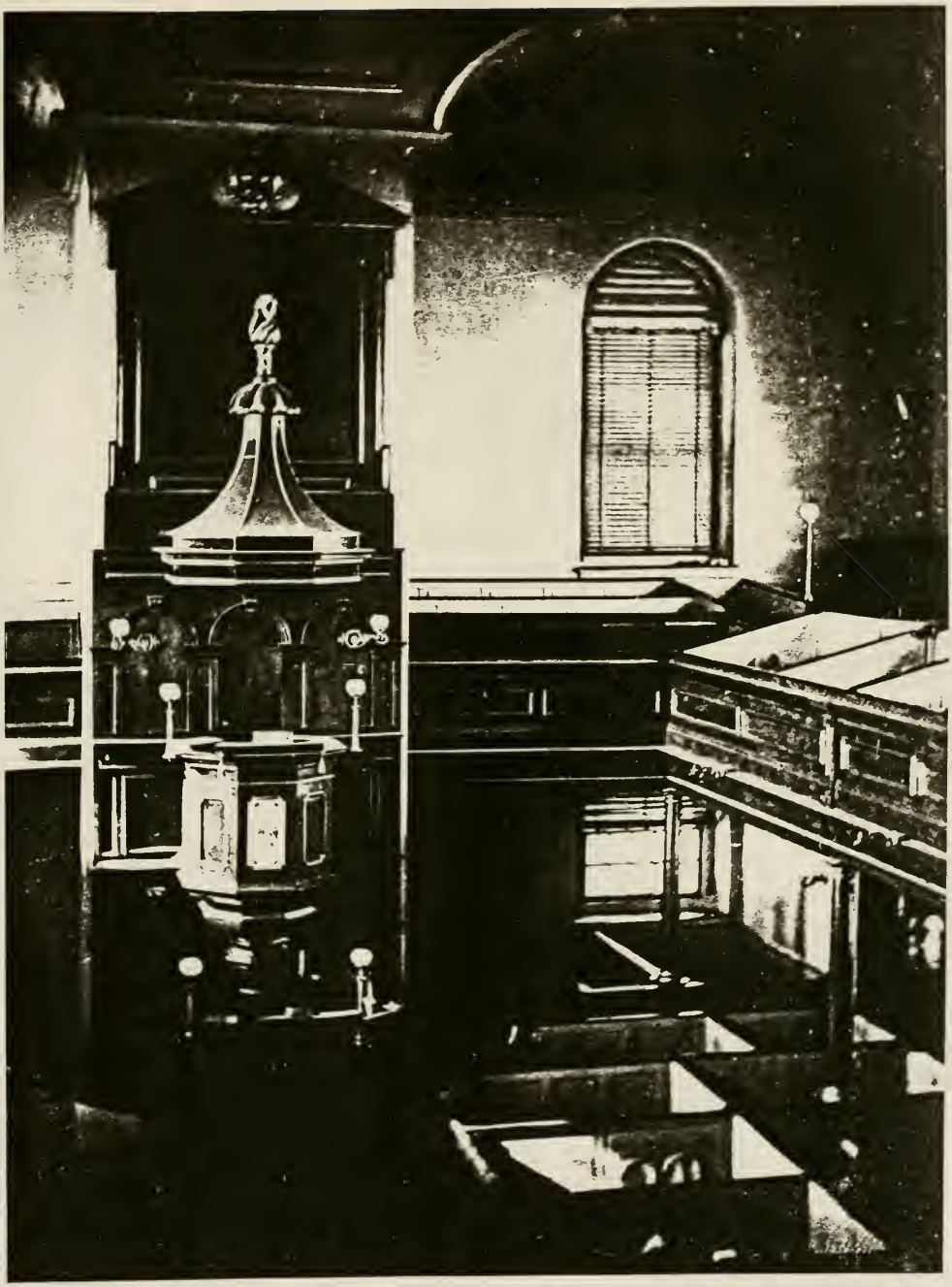

AISLE
AISLE
ALTAR GUILD
VESTRY
MAIN FLOOR
ALTER

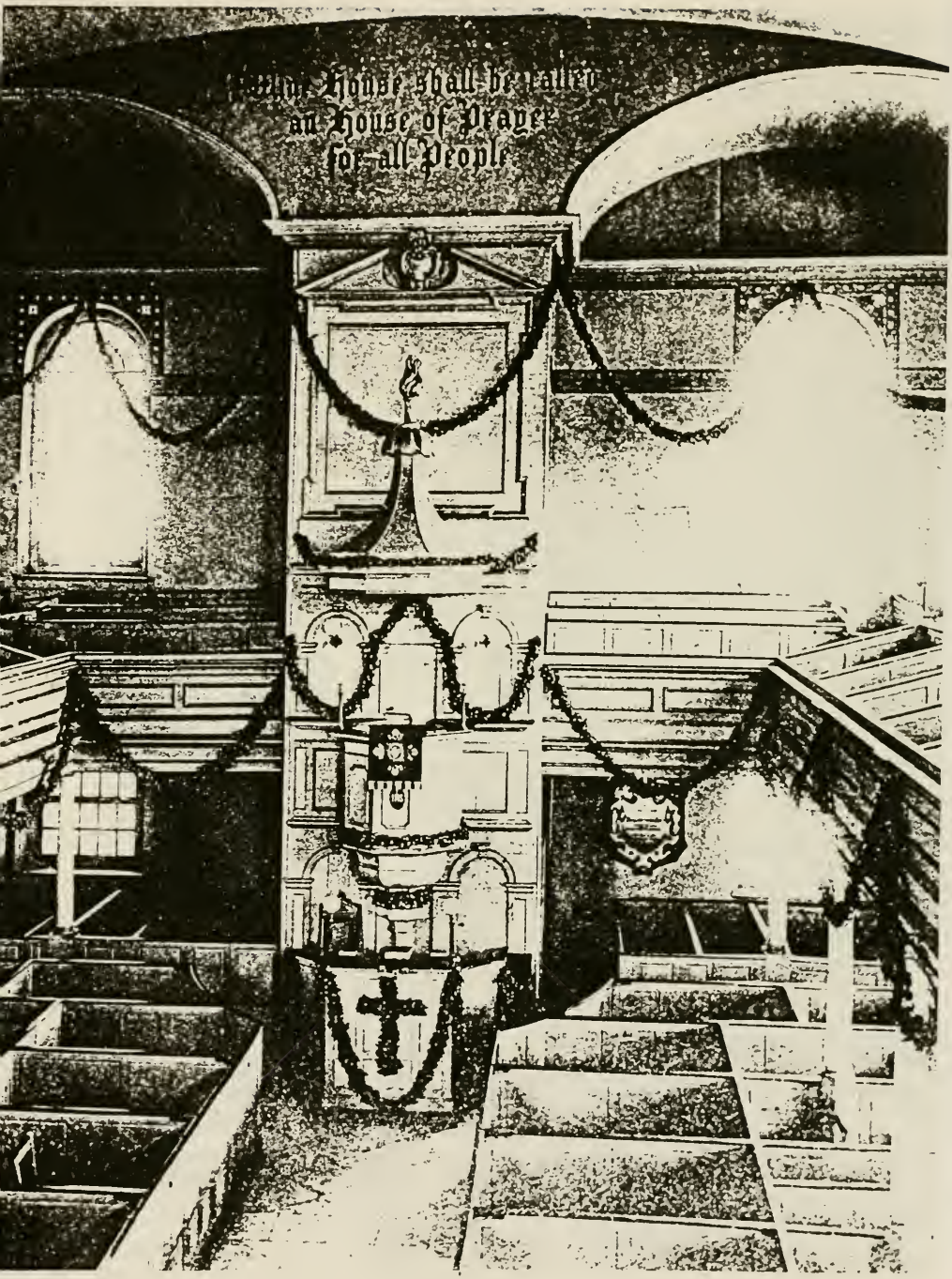


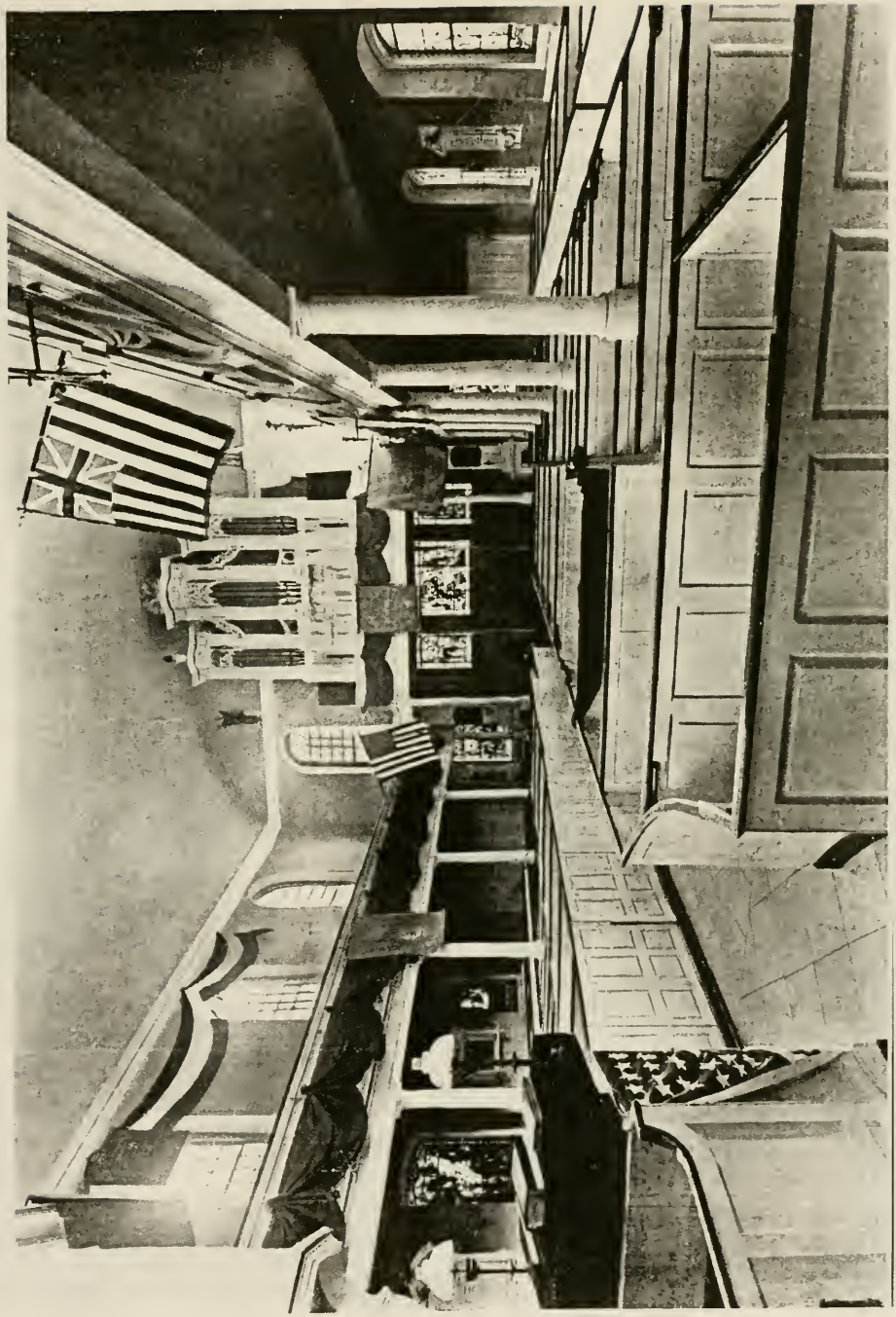









My House shall be called
an House of Prayer
for all People




MINE HOUSE SHALL BE CALLED
AN HOUSE OF PRAYER
FOR ALL PEOPLE.

13th

The Rev. Frederick W. Blatz (1938-1947)

14th

The Rev. Allen Evans (1947-1953)

15th

The Rev. Francis Rhein (1954-1957)

16th

The Rev. Joseph Koci, Jr. (1958-1968)

17th

The Rev. F. Lee Richards (1970-1985)

18th

The Rev. Ralph W. Pitman, Jr. (1985-1987)

19th

The Rev. Dr. Wendell W. Meyer (1989-present)

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